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Spiritism in Brazil

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On the last day of our ministry in São Paulo, with the car ready to leave the city, I received a call from a woman desperately looking for help. During almost an hour on the telephone she told me the drama she was living because of her husband's involvement with spiritism. Besides wasting all their money in occultism, he was making their married life unbearable. And every time she tried to convince him to leave the movement he would lie down, fall asleep, and start snoring immediately.

This is a typical example of the millions in modern Brazilian society, which has wealth and advanced technology on one hand and poverty on the other. Some voices in the recent past predicted that spiritism would disappear in a short time in Brazil, but that does not seem to be the case (Maust, 1985:7).

To live in a country where 70 percent of the population goes to the more than 300,000 spiritist *terreiros* (place of worship which can be a house or special hall built for this purpose or a private residence of one of the participants) is to live in daily contact with these people. How does one react to this Brazilian reality?

Most Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren still hold the position of the majority of evangelical groups, which avoids as much as possible any contact with spiritism and talks against it in preaching, studies, and conversations. But such an attitude of running away from reality is not tolerable in our day. Growing numbers of spiritists are threatening to take over the country in a peaceful way, yet at the cost of lives, which instead of being brought into the kingdom of light are thrown even deeper into the kingdom of darkness.

This study has for the first time caused me to think systematically through the issue and has been useful to me personally. Although other studies have been made by people set free from spiritism and may be more objective, I believe I can make a distinct contribution with my work.

What, then, is spiritism? What are its characteristics? How has it emerged and developed? Which are the main groups? What is the penetration of occultism in society, and what is the reaction of Brazilian people toward this powerful movement? How does spiritism impact plans for the evangelization of Brazil, and how do evangelicals respond to it?

Definition and general characteristics of spiritism

With the variety of groups which practice occultism in Brazil, it is difficult to find a definition which comprises all the ideas involved. Father Boaventura Kloppenburg, a Roman Catholic leader convinced of the futility of spiritism in all forms, offers the following definition:

> *In a general manner, "Spiritism" is understood as a pretentiously evoked, perceptible communication with spirits from the beyond, whether to receive news from them, to consult them (necromancy), or to place them at the service of man (magic); either to do good (white magic) or to perform some evil (black magic). To be a spiritist, therefore, it suffices to accept this minimum doctrine: that spirits exist; that these spirits are ardently interested in communicating with us in order to instruct or help us; that we men can evoke perceptible communication with these spirits* (quoted in Johnson, 1978:256).

In its treatment of "Principal Human Religions," the *Brazilian Almanaque* says that spiritism "is based on the belief of the immortality survival of souls and on the possibility that these souls, through those called 'mediums,' can make contact with people still living and transmit knowledge to them which enhances their moral improvement" (1986:505).

But what do the spiritists themselves say? It would be difficult, obviously, to enumerate what the different groups think, but *The Gospel According to Spiritism* by Allan Kardec (1986) certainly can be used as a valuable reference. Leon Hippolyte Denizard Rivail (1804-1869), who wrote under the pseudonym of Allan Kardec, is considered to be the classifier of spiritism. In his book, which became the bible of the spiritists, Kardec speaks about God's "three revelations" to humankind. The first came to Moses in the Ten Commandments, the second was Christ, and the third is spiritism itself. He says:

> *Spiritism is the new science which by irrefutable proof comes to reveal to humankind the existence and nature of the spiritual world and its relation to the material world. It shows us this world no longer as supernatural but, on the contrary, as one of the living and unceasingly active forces of nature, as the source of infinite phenomena heretofore uncomprehended and therefore rejected as the dominion of the fantastic and the marvelous. It is to these new relationships that Christ made reference under many circumstances, and why many things he said remained unintelligible or were falsely interpreted. Spiritism is the key which helps us to explain everything easily* (1986:43).

Kardec concludes that the Old Testament law is personified in Moses, that of the New Testament in Christ, and that spiritism is the third revelation of God's law (1986:43).

When we speak about spiritism, two directions in the Brazil-

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ian groups are to be considered. In the strict classical sense, spiritism is practiced by followers of Allan Kardec without many syncretisms. In a wider, popular sense, spiritism includes other groups such as the Umbanda, consisting of a symbiosis of what is called spiritism and the remains of African religions (Gerbert, 1970:47).

In this diversified picture, how shall we characterize spiritism in Brazil? Some characteristics are common in practically all groups and others are present in a greater number of them.

1. A fundamental postulate of spiritism is the "existence of God as cosmic intelligence, creator of the universe and on whom its equilibrium depends" (*Almanaque*, 1986:506).

2. As has already surfaced in the above discussion, communication with the spirits of another world is a basic and common aspect of all groups.

3. The reincarnation into a superior being in the next life (in a world superior to the present) is the goal of each spiritist. Through this process the spirits are said to evolve gradually in intellectual and moral levels, redeeming themselves from the mistakes done in life. The objective of reincarnation is the perfecting of that which makes the reincarnation necessary. Important for this concept is the belief in the existence of the soul which, after death, keeps alive the remembrance of all earthly experiences (*Almanaque*, 1986:506).

4. There is a hierarchy of mediums of communication, that is, of the leadership structure which is used by the spirits to transmit their messages.

5. Other aspects which are found in various groups (not in all) and with varied intensity are:

- demon possession (Wiebe, 1979:24);
- the importance of rites, which vary from meetings for simple meditation around a table to complete sessions with music and sacrifices of animals (even, it is said, sacrifices of people in black magic);
- exorcism (Wiebe, 1979:29);
- the magic spell (Sometti, 1984:29);
- healing (Wiebe, 1979:32);
- walk on fire (Wiebe, 1979:30);
- cult to the death (Wiebe, 1979:25).

6. It is also necessary to talk about the importance spiritism gives to Jesus. To resolve the problem of authority which Jesus is said to give to spiritists, he is defined as "the oldest and most evolved spirit that was ever incarnated upon earth" (McGregor, 1966:236). In March 1986 the magazine *Planeta* published an article which tried to relativize completely Jesus' work. The magazine gives a resumé of the article, saying:

> *Some Christian and non-Christian sects believe and teach certain dogmas as if they were unique and exclusive to their religion. Nevertheless, according to researchers, a comparative study of the tales and myths known until then shows us that there have been sixteen saviors confirmed who have come to rescue the sins of the world. All were born from virgins, sons of gods, and in some form had been sacrificed by their contemporaries. Their histories present many similar traits, among which stand out the divine right of governance inherited from the heavenly father, the resurrection after death, and the salvation of all those who believe in them. They were "the lights" of the human race* (Dubugras, 1986:35).

7. Another important detail is the cosmic vision of the spiritist. Wiebe emphasizes what Kardec already said in his definition of spiritism, that the spiritual world is not supernatural but a live and active power in nature. In other words, the activity of the spirits for the performers is a pure and obvious reality.

General historical development and main groups

Origin of Brazilian spiritism

Spiritism in Brazil obviously has much to do with the black slaves who came from Africa to Brazil during several consecutive centuries. In 1825 Alexander von Humboldt estimated the total population of Brazil to be at 4 million, of whom 1.96 million were black, 1.12 million were Indians and Mestizos, and 920,000 were white (Wiebe, 1979:79). During the centuries of slave traffic an estimated 3.5 million blacks were brought from Africa to Brazil (Bastide, 1978:35).

While they were being treated by the whites as animals without a soul (Bastide, 1978:129), the black Africans brought along their own world with its habits and beliefs. "Theoretically there were as many African religions capable of taking root in Brazil as there were transplanted ethnic groups" (Bastide, 1978:58-59). Scholars agree that Africans brought with them two basic lines of cults: the Bantu cults and the Yoruba cults.

While the majority of Latin countries were colonized by Spain, with its conservative Catholicism, the Portuguese brought to Brazil a more tolerant Catholicism, allowing for new religious experiences (Hattem, 1982:33). Thus a variety of religions was practiced, which contributed to the survival of African animism (Wiebe, 1979:86-87).

But what actually caused animism of the slaves to take

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definitive root in the making and thinking of a Brazilian people during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the mixing of races due in part to sexual intercourse between white landowners and black slave women (Wiebe, 1979:82). Related to this was the fact that the children of whites were entrusted to the care of blacks for learning the first things in life, including religion (Wiebe, 1979:82). The governess of the *Casa Grande* (the Big House of plantation owners), even if white, was living in constant contact with the slaves and thus started to assimilate attitudes, beliefs, and superstitions of the blacks (Bastide, 1978:70).

Another factor was the shortage of priests. Already during the era of Brazil's colonial empire (1500-1889) there were times when a *fazenda* (big land complex) would not receive even one ecclesiastical visit a year. Thus it was natural that both the Catholic Church and the landlords expected from the slaves only the most peripheral aspects of Catholicism. Because of that, the blacks knew how to cultivate their beliefs in hidden ways (McGregor, 1966:56).

In this general context two distinct groups began to take shape during the nineteenth century. The blacks of Bantu origin settled more in the Southeast region (Rio, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo) and were therefore more susceptible to outside influences such as Catholicism and Kardec spiritism, which later developed into the Umbanda cult in Rio.

Those of Yoruba origin developed their cult more in the Northeast, especially in Bahia, resulting in the practice called *Candomblé* or *Xangô*, which remained more faithful to the African traditions than did the Bantu in the Southeast. The name *Candomblé* is used for the cult itself as well as for the place of cultic practice.

The abolition of slavery in 1888 gave rise to many more problems than we can imagine. Where the slaves left the plantations, they felt uprooted and displaced and were haunted by terrible memories. While the plantation was the only place in which they were able to work with experience, knowledge, and confidence (Bastide, 1978:166), they now were ex-slaves seeking refuge en masse in the cities. This movement favored social grouping and the dynamic of development of their beliefs, points already mentioned above.

At the same time the strong impression of another element not brought by the blacks but by the whites was already being felt. But it was an element that would find fertile soil in black religiosity. It was Kardec spiritism in the strict sense of the term, as defined earlier. For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to go back a bit in history and give attention to this aspect of the movement.

The spiritism of Kardec

In the middle of the nineteenth century the French teacher Allan Kardec became interested in the "strange paranormal phenomenons which occurred with the Fox sisters in March of 1848 in Hydesville in the United States." After studying their movement, Kardec concluded that it was not charlatanism (as it had been labeled by others). Instead, he put the basic laws of spiritism in a book called *Livro dos Espíritos* (*Book of the Spirits*, 1857) and he declared, among other things, the possibility of communicating with the spirits (*Almanaque*, 1986:505).

Around 1860 his ideas arrived in Brazil, and within a short time they were circulating in the main cities of the empire (Gabriel, 1985:256). On September 17, 1865, the first spiritist meeting recognized as such in Brazil took place in Salvador, Bahia (Gerbert, 1970:48). In an attempt to be scientific, Kardec spiritism has always had people of high social and intellectual classes in its ranks. And still today it is found predominantly among people of the upper-middle class.

Besides communicating with the dead, reincarnation, the perfecting in better worlds, mediums, and other similar aspects, charity (love in action) plays a fundamental role in Kardec spiritism. Charity "is the fundamental virtue if not the only one," says Gerbert (1970:49). Chapter 15 of *The Gospel According to Spiritism* is totally dedicated to this aspect with the title "Outside of Charity There Is No Salvation" (Kardec, 1986:194ff.). Jesus is not **the** way, but the greatest spirit ever incarnated in the human race. His teachings are always interpreted according to the instructions of the spirits.

But interestingly, this ritual is not emphasized and the magic spell is not practiced in Kardecism. Having said this, it is possible to return to the flow of history.

The spiritism known as Umbanda

The movement of blacks to the cities—mostly to Rio, the capital of the republic at that time—at the turn of this century contributed to the growing number of *terreiros* and the development of African cults in that city.

The assembly of *terreiros* and occult groups in the city of Rio was known at the time as *Macumba.* The name can mean the cult itself, the act of sacrificing to the gods, the place of cult, or the rites celebrated in that place (Bramly, 1977:7). Today this term is used to designate spiritism in general or those *terreiros* and groups in Rio which originally did not associate with the Umbanda spiritism born later.

Early in the twentieth century this group, already infiltrated by Catholicism and the occultism of native Indians, received remarkable impulses from Kardecism. Kardecism brought to the gods and spirits the more scientific vision about the whole matter of cult and therefore was well received by the Macumba adherents (McGregor, 1966:166). This phenomenon was to have deep and lasting consequences for Brazilian society. "Since Kardec had made the acceptance of spirits as such respectable, however, the time was ripe for a religious movement embracing the generality of his principles but adding the mysticism, the ceremonial, the music and colour that he lacked" (McGregor, 1966:166).

And so Umbanda came to be one more influence on the syncretism already in abundance. Arthur Ramos, a famous Brazilian anthropologist, "saw Umbanda as a new complication of syncretism and summed it up as an Afro-Indo-Catholico-spirito-occultist religion" (Bastide, 1978:339). Now it is said about this spiritist sect: "Umbanda actively incorporates elements of the African Nago religion, indigenous Brazilian religions, Roman Catholicism, Kardecism, and other popular forms of spiritualism" (Hattem, 1982:35).

Founded in 1908 by the medium Zélio de Morais with the first *terreiro* in São Gonçalo near Rio de Janeiro (McGregor, 1966:169), the Umbanda spiritism developed to the point that it founded the Spiritist Union of Umbanda at its First Congress held in Brazil in 1941.

While characteristics such as reincarnation and the communication with the spirits are important, the strongest emphasis is on the seven lines in which the spirits (*Orixás*) are divided. As is characteristic of all syncretism, these *Orixás* are linked to the Catholic saints as follows:

- *Oxalá*, the creator, corresponds to Jesus;
- *Iemanjá*, mother of all *Orixás* as powerful gods, corresponds to the Virgin Mary;
- *Ogun*, the god of iron, corresponds to Saint George;
- *Oxossi*, god of the forest, is Saint Sebastian;
- *Xangô*, god of the storm, corresponds to Saint James;

•*Oxum* corresponds to Saint Catherine; and
•*Omulu* is seen as Saint Lazarus (Johnson, 1978:257; Hattem, 1982:38).

Whereas these are the major groups which characterize spiritism in Brazil, other names for subgroups and places should also be noted:
•*Catimbó* is a "mixed cult from Northeast Brazil in which Amerindian and European elements predominate; it has always emphasized healing" (Gabriel, 1985:254).
•*Batuque* are spiritist centers in Manaus (in the North) and in Rio Grande do Sul (in the South).
•*Quimbanda* is the use of black magic; white magic is used mainly in the Umbanda (McGregor, 1966:183).
•High spiritism or spiritualism is attributed more to Kardecism. Its practitioners like to be treated more as an intellectual group, keeping away from such practices as magic spells and animal sacrifices.
•Low spiritism, compared to the other groups, is intellectually less sophisticated in theory and practice. It is difficult, however, to define limits between the different groups of Afro-Brazilian religions, and some room for overlap must be allowed (Bramly, 1977:7).

Two names have transdenominational significance in Brazilian spiritism. They are Francisco (Chico) Xavier and Zé Arigó. Both were originally Kardecists. Chico Xavier is famous for his psychographical writings and novels in which he affirms that he is possessed by the spirit of someone known or desired and under whose influence he writes. His emphasis is on the love of Christ—that is, charity—as the ultimate of faith.

Zé Arigó is known worldwide for his operations which he has performed on people's eyes by using a simple kitchen knife while being possessed by a certain "Dr. Fritz." The patients have never been anesthetized before the operation, and afterward they have felt only some fatigue (McGregor, 1966:137).

Number of adherents

When it comes to the number of spiritists in Brazil, at least two factors make it difficult to count the adherents. First, few of those who are occultistic spiritists declare it in public polls because they always say they are Catholics. Second, until recently the spiritist religions were not even mentioned as a separate category in the questionnaire about religious practices.

But there is no doubt as to the reality of their existence, as Saint Clair has demonstrated:

> *Like all good descendants of the royal house of Portugal, they [the Brazilians] are Roman Catholics. In fact, the Pope often comments that Brazil is the world's largest Catholic nation. It's true. What His Holiness does not add is that it is also the world's largest Spiritist nation. Churches may be full for Sunday Mass but spirit centers are jam-packed the night before. All babies may be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost but a large percentage of them also get blessed in the name of Oxalá, Ogun and Iemanjá* (St. Clair, 1971:2).

In 1978 Globo TV made a public-opinion inquiry about religious attitudes of Brazilians. One question revealed that 84 percent of them think that "all religions are true and equally valid" (Hattem, 1982:35). And in the 1980 official census, 90 percent of the population said they belonged to the "Una Sancta Catholica et Apostolica," or simply, the Catholic Church. This shows that in fact a large part of the population "serves two lords." *The World Christian Encyclopedia* reports that more than 60 million are practitioners of the two religions (Barrett, 1982:188). This agrees with the survey by Globo TV, which also says that 60 million Brazilians have joined the Umbanda cults (Hattem, 1982:35).

Significant for measuring the participation of Brazilians in spiritism is the number of *terreiros* that exist for the practice of these beliefs. In 1960, 50,000 *terreiros* of Umbanda were spread around the country. In 1970 there were already 100,000, and in 1980 the number surpassed 300,000 (Hattem, 1982:36). Already in 1973, with more than 100,000 *terreiros*, Umbanda provided more places of worship to Brazilians than did all the Christian churches combined (Fischer, 1973:193).

Statistics are not absolute, but they indicate trends (Gabriel, 1985:59). In Brazil the trend is more than clear.

Reaction of government and Catholic Church authorities

As was stressed above, there were times of tolerance for spiritism in Brazil. But during the first half of this century—perhaps due to the proportion of the population affected by this movement—there were incidents of repression and persecution (Bastide, 1978:164). President Getulio Vargas was opposed to the Umbandist centers in the 1930s (Gabriel, 1985:56). Opposition was strong during that time, but it later softened as certain government leaders associated with some spiritist leaders.

Caio Fabio D'Araujo, Jr., Presbyterian pastor from Niterói, said to the Brazilian Congress of Evangelization in Belo Horizonte in 1983, "We are a people who see in the office of a President of the Republic a 'mother-of-saint' (leader of the Candomblé of Bahia)" (see tape). Fabio makes mention of the ex-medium Heber Soares (today a servant of Christ) who, while still a practicing spiritist, was asked to come to the Planalto Palace to counsel two presidents of the republic, Emilio Garrastazu Medici (1969-74) and Ernesto Geisel (1974-79) (see tape by Fabio).

Candidates of any given political party in Brazil are well aware of the fundamental importance spiritism has for its leaders in election campaigns.

But what is the Catholic Church position toward spiritism? As already noted, the indifference of priests and landlords toward the religious practices of blacks led to the identification of African gods with Catholic saints and resulted in a syncretistic system that was neither Catholic nor African (McGregor, 1966:56-58). On one hand, blacks were assimilating their religious ideas and forms of cultic practices with some Catholic names; on the other hand, whites were influenced slowly but systematically by the gods and customs imported with the slaves from overseas.

Yet during all this time, but especially in the twentieth century, there were voices expressing opposition to syncretism and to the Yoruba and Bantu religions.

A leader in this opposition in recent decades has been Father Boaventura Kloppenburg, who not only wrote several books against spiritism but also "appeared on TV with black magic instruments to demonstrate that they do not have any power and that there is no reason to fear them" (McGregor, 1966:182). But already twenty years ago Father Boaventura moderated his attacks: "Perhaps the church has realized that, by attacking the Umbandistas it brings about the only thing they cannot achieve: unity within the movement!" (McGregor, 1966:182).

Today, however, there is not only identification on the part of the people with spiritism and the parallel religious practice of Catholicism and spiritism. There is even a different and dangerous attitude on the part of church leaders in relation to occultic practices. Of much significance in this regard is the observation made with reference to Mark 9:37-42 in the Catholic manual of liturgy. According to this attitude,

> *the liturgy stresses the possibility that God acts outside the*

"regular" assembly . . . (that is) important in our milieu where macumbistic and spiritistic healers do great works in Jesus' name. There is a mentality to scare believers against everything done in Brazilian religious syncretism. Perhaps it is more evangelical not to reject so much, but to acknowledge that God may use such men to effectuate his love. Such an attitude will show a comprehensive face of the Church, trying to recognize the good in all things (quoted in Hattem, 1982:36-37).

Besides affecting the Catholic Church, the danger is real also in the evangelical circles, as is seen from the comments of a pastor: "Doing something against terreiro would separate me from my most influential members" (Hattem, 1982:36). Such preoccupation is general among church leaders.

Penetration of spiritism in society

Any person familiar with the subject begins to ask for reasons of such expressed interest in spiritism and its explosive growth in Brazil. Ulrich Fischer points out reasons why people were attracted to Kardecism: Of those converted to spiritism, notes Fisher, 53.2 percent were strongly drawn to it by its intellectual transparency and scientific teaching; 20.9 percent because of illness; 21.1 percent because of pain, sorrow, and fear; 10.9 percent because of mediumistic phenomena; 14.4 percent because of influence by a personal friend; 1.5 percent because of faith; and 1 percent because of spontaneous belief (1977:160).

Various other reasons have been given for the growth of the Umbanda. Elsewhere Fischer states: "This cult makes possible through its supporting community a way of fitting in the urban industrial community for those people moving from the country to the big cities. It provides support and self-confidence for the uprooted, offering them in their suppressed subexistence new liberty for their self-realization" (Fischer, 1973:200).

Johnson cites still other reasons, saying that Umbanda not only assists men and women to become integrated in urban society but also offers opportunity for those of the lower classes to rise and participate in small groups which allow them to feel socially accepted. Furthermore, it works to provide for laypersons a relevant role which they lacked in Brazilian traditional religion, a role which gives the individual the possibility of "rising to a position of prestige and status." Finally, there is the relative ease of rising to leadership because little formal training is required (Johnson, 1978:263-68).

Hattem stresses some other attractive aspects in Umbanda. A general idea is that Umbandists are tolerant of other religions and generally do not require members to leave their traditional churches. They conveniently allow a person to sojourn in the borderlands of the Christian church while cultivating another religious interest (Hattem, 1982:35). He goes on to speak of some specific elements: "There is mediumistic healing in case of illness, protection from evil spirits, the development of occult powers, and the potential for material blessings. Much of its larger success is due to the effective relationship Umbanda has developed with regard to Christianity" (Hattem, 1982:38).

Certainly the lack of priests and the superficiality of Catholicism, which is, moreover, a historical reality in Brazil, contributed to the exodus of the faithful from the Catholic Church (Wiebe, 1979:95-97).

Spiritism in general tries to give a more desirable answer to death (humanity's fundamental question) and, by making available to followers the possibility of communicating with loved ones already passed away, it certainly poses as an attractive force (Wiebe, 1978:26, 138).

But how does spiritism penetrate Brazilian society as a whole? It is clear that the thinking of the Brazilian is already permeated with superstitions imparted with colonial Catholicism. The fact that Brazilian spiritism is not overtly shown is because it exists in part under the cover of Catholicism. Yet it is evident in every place and on all social levels of Brazil.

Mass communication is impregnated with spiritist elements throughout the country. As Caio Fabio D'Araujo, Jr., said in Belo Horizonte: "We are a people who see in the theater, in the movie, and in the soap operas demonic manifestations of spiritualism . . . soaking our own houses and minds and manipulating our people in this direction" (see Fabio tape).

A few years ago two soap operas were shown as a daily television series over a period of several months. One was entitled "Sétimo Sentido" ("Seventh Sense," 1982) while the other one was called "O Todo-Poderoso" ("The All-Powerful One," 1980). What was stressed here was "the world of *terreiros*, white tables, miracle tents, the world of medical doctors, charlatans, quacks, paranormals and 'fathers-of-saints' " (Sometti, 1984:17).

Soccer in Brazil is constantly related to the superstition of spiritism. Joao Saldanha, who as coach in the earlier stages prepared the Brazilian team for the World Cup "Jules Rimet" in 1970, when Brazil won the trophy, commented regarding soccer of Bahia, the state of *Candomblé*: "If *Mandinga* (magic spell against the opponent team) would win games, in the Bahian competition all the games would always end tied" (Sometti, 1984:16).

Another fact which shows the reality of spiritism is that newspapers and radio and television stations cannot exist if they do not have a horoscope section in their pages or programs.

Briefly, the mentality of people is constantly fed by demonic and spiritist elements. This shapes in a lasting way the worldview of the Brazilian, a view which is far removed from God's purpose for this nation of 135 million people.

Implications for the church of Jesus Christ

How do we respond to all of this? What is our understanding of the facts, and to what actions does this motivate us?

The attitude of traditional evangelical churches toward spiritism has been a mix of indifference and fear. Some leaders refuse to deal with the matter related to Umbanda, Macumba, and Kardecism because of fear. This fear probably comes from the lack of knowledge and understanding.

Some people say that the solution to such problems as magic spells and demon-possession are to be found in the sciences (Sometti, 1984:84). Research shows that only 2.5 percent of the population look to a priest or pastor for help because they consider them incompetents in solving magic spell problems (Sometti, 1984:82).

Besides, there are people who call themselves Christian but practice spiritism at the same time. They cause real concern to the leadership of the churches. There is another basic implication for the church: if spiritism is in fact shaping the worldview of the Brazilians as a whole, how will this influence the worldview of Brazilian evangelicals? The consequences can be disastrous.

I want to present a personal conclusion as a final observation. I believe that as spiritism advances in Brazil (and if there is no opposing barrier or a special intervention from God), it can change from a persecuted group of the past to a dominating and oppressing religion in the near future. It is lamentable to have to admit that while great numbers of evangelical Christians divide themselves more and more, the spiritists can unify themselves more and more each year.

Fischer shows the optimism among followers of the biggest

sect when he says, "The Umbandist Brazilians are convinced that their religion is not only the genuine religion of the Brazilian, but the religion of the future for humanity" (Fischer, 1973:200-01).

What can be done about this? A great part of the Brazilian evangelical church needs to get out of its attitude of indifference and its fear and defensive position by only speaking against the enemy. It needs to face the situation with full confidence in God's victory and in God's salvific purpose of liberation for the Brazilian nation. As Caio Fabio D'Araujo, Jr., said in 1983:

> *We need to practice an evangelization which accepts the challenge of confrontation with the spiritual forces of evil. We have talked enough about the growth of spiritism. Enough has been said about the proliferation of the* terreiros *of Macumba! Enough has been talked about the devil's action! It's time to take over the spiritual weapons. It's time to believe in what the Word of God says: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing, . . . absolutely nothing shall hurt you" (Luke 10:19). "No evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:10-11)* (see his tape).

We need to embrace this truth so that the 135 million Brazilians come to know and serve the only God who has revealed himself in Christ as Savior and Lord over all and to whose glory everything shall be accomplished.

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A Pauline Power Encounter Response to Umbanda

RAYMOND PETER HARMS-WIEBE

Brazil is encountering a phase of rapid urbanization. The metropolitan area of São Paulo has grown from 8 million in 1970 to 17 million in 1986. During this same period, Brasilia has grown from 0.5 million to 1.5 million. This urban movement, coupled with Rome's growing opposition to spiritist Catholics (15.7% of all Catholics in Brazil) since Vatican II, has created an unusual openness among Brazilians to new religious possibilities (Barrett, 1982:186-87).

At present, Umbanda is one of the most attractive religious options for the recently urbanized Brazilian, for it provides a mystic solidarity between the two worlds of Brazil: "archaic" Brazil, still colonial in character, oriented to the past rather than the future; and modern Brazil, with its skyscrapers, huge factories, and scientific agriculture, feverishly striving toward the future. Being overtly syncretistic, Umbanda includes elements from antiquity as well as from modernity. The result has been the emergence of a religion that is new, different, and greater than the sum of its parts, a profound synthesis integrating

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essential aspects of Brazilian religious beliefs and practices. Although precise statistics are not available, the growth of this new spiritistic movement and its attraction of the masses is certain. One estimate of growth is 324 percent across Brazil from 1970 to 1975 (Wiebe, 1979:75).

The following essay requires some qualification. Because of its inherent dynamism, Umbanda continues to be a complex phenomenon, changing in belief and ritual from center to center. The present discussion, therefore, is a rather general treatment of a diverse religious movement.

Umbanda

Beginnings

Sixty years ago a Rio de Janeiro spiritist group under the leadership of Zelio de Morias relocated in São Goncalo in order to escape police harassment and to establish a new cult center. Direction for the move was transmitted by a spirit known as Caboclo das Sete Encruzilhadas (Indian Spirit of the Seven Crossroads). In São Goncalo, the first Umbanda center was founded. Black and white worshipers, who came from both macumba[1] and Kardecism,[2] gathered together and practiced a more evolved form of African ritual under the influence of Europe's Kardecism, the leadership of an Indian spirit guide, and the name of Catholicism's Our Lady of Piety. Here was embodied the essence of racial and religious syncretism.

Beliefs

Umbanda, like Brazilian culture, is a union of Indian animism, African fetishism, and Portuguese Catholicism. In fact, Umbandists consider their faith to be the most profound expression of their culture.

Having its etymological roots in the Bantu "Quimbanda" (root: *ymbanda*), the Angolan name for the supreme head of the cult, Umbanda remembers Africa. But, behind the nostalgic vision of the ancestral Africa is a determination to deny that Africa fathered Umbanda, a resolution to reduce the slaves transported to Brazil to merely one link in an initiatory chain that leads back far beyond them to Egypt, India, or Lemuria.[3] At the same time, the myth of Lemuria makes the primitive black the champion of the highest civilization, which, debased though it was by tropical heat, exterminatory wars waged by whites, and cosmic catastrophes, never totally perished.

African magic is the heritage bequeathed to the Negro race by the ancient Lemurian civilization, the highest that ever existed, which predates that of India. The religious ideals of Umbanda were launched on the African continent by the divine Kairu kings, who had come from the land of Lemuria, of which Africa was a part. Being one of the greatest streams of human thought, Umbanda has existed on earth for more than ten thousand years. Its roots are lost in the impenetrable depths of the most ancient philosophies.

In the Umbanda worldview, humankind is the interaction and conflict point for opposing cosmic forces: negative ones leading to materiality and positive ones leading to spirituality. Because humankind's moral progress is the essential ingredient of true spiritism, the mediums of the spiritist center must be virtuous. Jesus Christ exemplified humility and suffering. If suffering is the road to virtue, the Indians and the Negroes, who have endured the violence of the white colonists and masters, are more likely than whites to become the spirits of light in the beyond. Jesus has chosen the humble Indians and the unfortunate Negroes to carry the light to the whites. Having suffered, they are spiritually advanced and are closer to dematerialization. The entrance of white civil servants, businesspeople, and industrialists into Umbanda is seen as evidence that former masters now bow to astral forces of which Indians and Negroes are mediators.

The cosmic forces (i.e., spirits) leading to spirituality are divided into seven lines which correspond to the Yoruba Orixas.[4] The first line (*Oxala*) is a global conglomeration of spirits from various nations but is primarily composed of Negroes who were noble Catholics during their earthly lives. The second line (*Yemanja*) protects sailors and women, the third (*Orient*) comprises Asiatics and Europeans, the fourth (*Oxossi*) and fifth (*Xango*) consist of Caboclos,[5] the sixth (*Ogun*) is ambiguous, and the seventh embraces the disembodied spirits from the peoples of Africa. The Orixa depicts an extraordinary syncretism of nations, African gods, Amerindian nature spirits, and Catholic saints.

The astral forces of the Orixas communicate with the living through disembodied Negroes or Indians, who, during their earthly existence, took from the riches of the kingdoms of nature only that which was indispensable to them, in contrast to the civilized people, who ambitiously, greedily, and violently stripped nature bare in their implacable destructiveness. The Orixas control the province of nature and channel divine energy to earth to nourish its life. They minimize and neutralize the negative emissions that are constantly bombarding the earth, produced or attracted by the wickedness or materiality of its inhabitants. The ultimate function of the mediums is to allow the astral forces to help human beings in their spiritual pursuits.

The goal of Umbanda is a universal brotherhood. This community will consist of mutually loving adherents of spiritism, spirits of light, former Indians, former Negroes, and former whites, free from distinctions of color, all equally luminous. The black is ready to reject African traditions, provided Kardecism will divest itself of its white ethnocentrism. It is true that Umbanda appeals to the marginalized, all the victims of society, all the unfortunate, but it does so in order to save them from moral degradation and to restore their sense of dignity.

Conversion to Umbanda

The conversion process to Umbanda consists of four stages similar to conversion stages encountered in many African religious cults. First, a personal problem is brought to the Umbanda medium (e.g., physical illness, emotional stress due to alienation, sorrow over a death, disappointment in love, economic deprivation, or frustration with life). Second, a period of experimentation occurs in which the subject attempts to confirm or invalidate the results obtained in the first stage. Observing the medium in a possessed state reinforces the growing realization of spiritual presence and power. Third, being convinced of the reality of an encounter with spiritist phenomena and pleased with the dividends received in the stage of experimentation, the person makes a commitment and begins to consider himself or herself an Umbandist. Although no overt action demonstrates this new allegiance, there is an attitudinal shift. Fourth, all former learning and all previous orientation are integrated into the Umbandist matrix, resulting in a new worldview (Johnson, 1978:261-62).

Growth factors

Several primary factors contribute to the rapid growth of Umbanda. First, the migration of the Brazilian rural population to the city inevitably produces acute crisis experiences for migrants. Groups and associations which could facilitate integration into urban life are often scarce, and those urban institutions which are encountered often fail to provide a sense of belonging. Providing a supportive social context and a value system to

explain reality, Umbanda helps integrate the migrant into urban society.

Another major factor in the growth of Umbanda is its provision of a significant role for the layperson which is absent in traditional Brazilian religious life. Status and responsibility with authority are granted to all members of the group. Decisions affecting the well-being of the center are made democratically.

A third factor is the experiential reality of Umbanda. Adherents are able to invoke wise, powerful, saving, medicinal, ever-accommodating spirits in response to the pains of love, the difficulties of life, and the questions of health. Audible divine answers are given to personal problems. All of human experience is included within the province of religion.

A Pauline Response to Umbanda

The power of Jesus in Pauline cosmology

While being grateful for the spiritual help received through the mediums of Umbanda, Umbandists continue to search for a power-complex which will free them from the dominion of the powers of this world (i.e., black magic, socioeconomic and political forces). The Jesus of Pauline cosmology offers such a liberating power-complex. Being the Creator of all powers and authorities, Jesus is in the process of reconciling all things to himself (Col. 1:15-20). By the cross and the resurrection, he has disarmed the powers and has triumphed over them (Eph. 1:20-21; Col. 2:15).

Jesus' faithfulness to death was the beginning of an authentic restored humanity (Phil. 2:6). His concrete and historical suffering, with which black or Indian Umbandists can identify, resulted in his exaltation (Eph. 1:19-22; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 2:13-15). The astral forces and spirits of the Umbanda power-complex have been revealed in their true nature, and Jesus has been exalted above the entire Orixa.

Paul's writings suggest that several different levels of meaning are implied by his usage of "powers" language, including the following: (1) the traditions, doctrines, and practices which guide the religious and private life of the Umbandist; (2) the natural, biological, or historical determinants of one's life; (3) the political, financial, juridical, and ecclesiastical potentates who dominate Brazil; and (4) the angelic or demonic beings of both white and black magic who influence and guide the affairs of people's lives. The "principalities and powers" are at the same time intangible spiritual entities and concrete, historical, social, or psychic structures or institutions of all created things and all created life.

Although defeated foes, the powers continue to exist, hostile to humankind and its interests (Eph. 2:2; 6:12). The ruler of the kingdom of the air continues to work among the people of disobedience, but the love of God in Christ has effectively delivered those who believe from the dominion of the powers. Although there will be no cessation of hostilities for newly converted Umbandists until "the age to come," the powers are limited by the proclamation of Christ and the existence of the church. These limitations are the sign and promise of their defeat. The lordship of Christ and his supremacy over the powers is the message which must be proclaimed to the followers of Umbanda.

The mission of Jesus' faithful community

Ephesians 3:10-11 purports a cosmic function for the church. Grasping and extending Jesus' prophetic ministry, the church performs a mediatory role to the powers. The knowledge given to the church saves human beings and makes them respect the order of the universe, including the proper place assigned to its various forces and features.

As a faithful community in God's kingdom, the church is an agent of revelation proclaiming peace. The immense problems facing Umbandists are subjected to Christ and are brought within the scope of the church's mission. Racial discrimination, illness, death, and poverty are addressed and countered by the life and faith of the Christian community. Umbandists encounter God by encountering the kingdom of God, that is, by witnessing a community of character and virtue which exists in confrontation with the powers of this world (Eph. 4:17—6:18).

The very existence of the church, in which blacks, Indians, and whites, who previously acted according to the persuasion of the world, exist together in Christ's loving community, is itself a sign, a mystery, a message to the powers that their ruthless domination over humanity has come to an end. The church is one of God's creative acts in history that affects the institutions and structures of society, the spiritual forces of the universe, and the social and individual existences of all people. Being entrusted to demonstrate God's dominion and love, the church is appointed and equipped to be a public exponent of grace and unity. Political and social forces, cultural and religious institutions, traditions, majorities, minorities, angels, and demons are exposed to the church's testimony.

Part of this testimony is the provision of a meaningful role for all members of the community. All members have dignity and have been gifted by the Spirit of Jesus for service and involvement. Even though the existing social and economic powers in Brazil may want to marginalize certain sectors of society, the church refuses to bow under their influence and pressure. Its existence is a sign of the end time, the incipient encirclement, and imminent defeat of the powers (Eph. 3:9-10).

The process of conversion to Jesus

Listening to Umbandists. The presuppositional grid of Umbandists will form the context in which they will comprehend Jesus Christ, at least initially. The space concept of Umbanda presupposes a "spirited universe," as does Scripture. Conceiving of a variety of sources of power which impinge upon Brazilian life, Umbanda attempts to provide each adherent with an inventory of the powers, and the advocates of Christianity do themselves harm by refusing to take proper heed to the wisdom and experience of the various cult centers.

Having listened and understood, the Christian missionary must approach Umbandists with sympathy, remembering that the system of belief to which spiritists are attached, however uncongenial to the Christian, has given meaning to life and perhaps consolation in death. Dialogue must occur within the philosophical thought forms of Umbandists rather than in the Western orbit of scientific intellectualism. Affirming the points of strength in the Umbandist understanding of the world and life, the Christian must realize that the cosmology of the powers is at the center of Umbandists' worldview and, in essence, existence. Only an understanding of the Umbanda power-complex will enable the missionary to comprehend reactions to the supremacy of Christ over all powers.

Power encounter and conversion process. In order for Jesus Christ to be presented relevantly and universally, he must be presented in terms of a power encounter. A power encounter is that clash in cultural worldview between the redeeming, liberating power of the kingdom of God manifest in Christ, including his victory over evil powers (Eph. 1:21), and the kingdom of Satan in which the world exists (Eph. 2:2). In the life of Umbandists, the earliest, most prominent shift in worldview, subsequent to the beginning of their new life in the kingdom of God, might well be communion with the Lord of the powers in Umbanda cosmology.

The thrust of the gospel is that Christ is to be received in terms of a transfer of allegiance. The inner trauma of power encounter in the conversion experience of Umbandists is inevitable, for by altering their power-complexes, they are being delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). Any true conversion will involve a shift in power base.

As Umbandists struggle to understand the implications of Jesus' lordship on their own lives and worldviews, the Christian missionary can only act as an advocate for allegiance transfer. The actual power encounter will take place within the Umbandists. They must determine to forsake "the powers" of Umbanda for the transforming power of Jesus. Conversion, then, will entail a life of decisions on the part of Umbandists to move toward God as the Spirit of Jesus leads them toward truth (Phil. 3:7—4:1).

Although the Ephesian letter may not have been written to the church at Ephesus specifically, Paul may have had their power encounter in mind when he articulated his theology of the powers (Eph. 1:19-21; 6:10-18). In Ephesus, various exorcisms caused sorcerers to alter their power-complex. The formal expression of this change in power allegiance took the form of burning scrolls of sorcery (Acts 19:13-20). The Christian advocate may also have to engage in exorcism when proclaiming the lordship of Christ to Umbandists.

Unless Jesus Christ is elevated in Umbandists' cosmology as he is in heaven, dualisms will persist, syncretism will be advanced, and Jesus will be reduced to being simply an additional helpful source of power directing the first line of the Orixa (Oxala). The test will come in time of crisis when the converted spiritists require power or knowledge which they feel Jesus Christ is withholding. Crises force a person's true cosmology to be activated. Only when Umbandists reach out to Jesus and find the solution to immediate needs (sickness, death, etc.) will they become aware of greater needs: access to God, the forgiveness of sins, and the attainment of virtue through suffering in Jesus.

Demonstrating Jesus' love and power. The authority of Jesus to deliver, forgive, and justify must be validated through concrete praxis. Christian advocates must not only dialogue with Umbanda's adherents sensitively and confront the falsity of their power constellations; they must also verify their claims concerning Jesus' authority through loving community, ministering to the socioeconomic, physical, and spiritual needs inherent in Brazilian life. The Brazilian masses must feel Christ's hand of empathy and power upon their daily lives through the lives of their fellow human beings, for they have seldom known the church as the home of the Lord of love and power.

The chart below listing similarities and dissimilarities in Umbanda, Pauline Christianity, and Western Christianity markedly demonstrates the relevance of Pauline cosmology in responding to Umbanda and the corresponding irrelevance of Western Christianity

Similarities and Dissimilarities in Umbanda, Pauline Christianity, and Western Christianity

Umbanda	Pauline Christianity	Western Christianity
1. Umbanda is a profound expression of Brazilian culture integrating elements of European, African, and Indian heritage.	1. Recognizing and affirming the dignity of all cultures, the church will incarnate the truth of Jesus in the thought-forms of the given context. The good will be maintained and the destructive transformed (Acts 15; 17:16-34; 19:13-20).	1. Attitude of cultural superiority and arrogance. Christianity is identified with Western culture.
2. Umbanda finds its religious roots in the myth of Lemuria.	2. The faithful community of Jesus finds its roots in the creation of the universe, whose Creator has also created its life together (Col. 1:15-20; Eph. 1:4; 3:9-11, 14-15).	2. Western Christianity is rooted in a platonic reading of Scripture.
3. Humankind is the interaction point for positive and negative spirit forces. Human beings who practice Umbanda are vulnerable to black magic (e.g., macumba).	3. Jesus' followers presuppose the existence of hostile spirits and powers. Jesus has authority over all powers: social, economic, political, biological, white magic, black magic (Eph. 1:19-21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:10-18).	3. Avoidance and denial of the spirit world. Allegiance to the socioeconomic and political powers of the North Atlantic.
4. The essence of true spiritism is moral progress and, therefore, its mediums must be virtuous. Suffering is the road to virtue.	4. The development of character and virtue, that is, conformity to the image of God, is central to the Christian life. Suffering is the road to virtue (Rom. 5:3-4; 8:29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 1:3-7; 12:7-10; Eph. 4:17—5:21; Col. 3:1-17).	4. Correct belief is elevated above the development of character and virtue. Success (e.g., socioeconomic, academic, numerical church growth) is considered to be the indicator of virtue.
5. Conversion is a process of movement toward spirit-realization.	5. Conversion entails a life of decisions toward God as the Spirit of Jesus leads the disciple toward truth (Phil. 3:12-17).	5. Conversion is a single event manipulated by a prayer formula. A rigid doctrinal system hinders the genuine search for truth.
6. A meaningful role is provided for all members of the local center.	6. All members of the local community are considered to be gifted and are given a meaningful role in the life of the community (Eph. 4:7, 11-13; 1 Cor. 12:7-26).	6. A hierarchical ecclesiastical structure elevates bishops, priests, and pastors above the laity and prevents the majority from exercising their giftedness.
7. Umbanda is concerned with daily-life needs.	7. The church of Jesus Christ is concerned with daily-life needs (1 Cor. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 8:1-7; Gal. 2:10).	7. An otherworldly orientation suppresses present life-problems in hope for eternal bliss.
8. The goal of Umbanda is a universal brotherhood.	8. The goal of Pauline Christianity is the establishment of faithful communities which love and integrate into their life all peoples of the earth. No distinctions are made on the basis of race, social class, or sex (Acts 15; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-22; 3:6; 4:2-6; Col. 3:10-11).	8. Racial and social groups are segregated.

As a young Western missionary who is trying to understand the meaning of this knowledge, I would like to set the following as my objectives for mission in Brazil:

1. To be a culture-learner, affirming the good in Brazilian people and their culture.
2. To celebrate the creative work of God in the universe, in the life of the Brazilian church, and in me.
3. To recognize the reality of evil powers (e.g. demonic beings, unjust political and economic structures) and to respond appropriately in the power and authority of Jesus when confronted by them.
4. To be open to the truth-lessons that God has for me and the community of Jesus in Brazil, thereby being progressively conformed to the image of God, both individually and as part of the corporate group.
5. To encourage all members of Jesus' faithful community to exercise their giftedness in the life of the group, not allowing myself to be elevated in status and importance above the rest of the community.
6. To be sensitive to the daily needs of the Brazilian people and to be willing to experience life in all its down-to-earthness.
7. To be a catalyst within the church for social and racial integration.

Notes

1. Macumba is a form of "low spiritism" which is essentially African in origin. Ritual acts of deity worship are emphasized.
2. Kardecism is a form of "high spiritism," originating in Europe. Although the influence of Eastern mystical religions on the teachings of Allan Kardec (the codifier of Kardecism) is conspicuous, this form of spiritism is highly rationalistic. Charity projects, human progress, and communication with the spirits are stressed.
3. Lemuria refers to a hypothetical continent thought by some to have existed long ago, now supposedly covered by the Indian Ocean.
4. Yoruba is an African name for the pantheon of deities represented in the Orixa. The Orixa is a generic name for the Yoruba deities, the intermediaries between Olorun (the head of the pantheon) and mortals.
5. Caboclo—(a) a civilized Brazilian Indian; (b) a person of mixed Indian and white blood; (c) a peasant, especially one whose skin is copper-colored; (d) an Indian god worshiped in a caboclo candomble, macumba, or catimbo.

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The Pilgrimage of Tottori Church

MARY BEYLER

Nihon Menonaito Tottori Kirisuto Kyokai (Japan Mennonite Tottori Christian Church) is one of 17 churches of the Japan Mennonite Christian Conference spread across the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. The first two Hokkaido Mennonite churches were begun in 1951, with seven more founded in the 1950s. Five churches were established in the sixties including Tottori at the end of that decade. Two more Mennonite churches came into being in the seventies, the newest one in 1985.

Conference membership now totals 400, which means an average of 24 members per church. Tottori Church as of April 1986 had 25 members, so it stands as a typical-size Hokkaido Mennonite congregation. Thus this study may have value beyond the specific Tottori details.

However, this paper is first and foremost a look at Tottori Church as a unique congregation and as the first Hokkaido Mennonite Church established by a deliberate teaming of American and Japanese co-workers. The focus is on the beginnings, with a chart and graphs and some analysis to summarize the subsequent years.

Preparing for work in Tottori

Interest in work in Tottori, a section in the western part of Kushiro, a city of about 200,000 in eastern Hokkaido, had begun long before the actual church-planting team of Charles and Ruth Shenk and Akira Mimoto set foot in the area in 1967. In anticipation of future evangelism in a new region of the city, Tsurugadai Church of Kushiro, one of the first two Mennonite congregations founded in Hokkaido, had purchased land in the western part of the city about ten years before. House meetings were being held in members' homes in that area, and students of Eastern Hokkaido Bible School, a night school based at Tsurugadai Church, were not only praying for evangelism there but also gaining practical experience by taking responsibility for those meetings. Akira Mimoto, who worked at a post office by day and studied at night, was one of those EHBS students.

Meanwhile, Charles and Ruth Shenk were beginning to consider moving from Shibecha, a town north of Kushiro, where they had established a church in 1959. The Shenk family had arrived in Japan as Mennonite Board of Missions workers in 1957, and after two years of language study in Tokyo, they had gone north to Hokkaido and had been working in Shibecha since then. In both a Janaury 1967 report to MBM and a February 20, 1967, letter to the Hokkaido Mennonite Church and the Japan Mennonite Mission executive committees, Shenks pursued the subject of a possible move. Charles wrote in the letter, "We feel it would stimulate the growth of the congregation here and give us a chance to work in a new situation perhaps more in need of the contribution we could make than the present one is." However, Shibecha Church members requested that Shenks remain in Shibecha for another year and a half.

Discussion continued with the Tsurugadai and Shibecha congregations and conference and mission leaders. In March, Shibecha Church gave an invitation to one of their members, Ukichi Kondo, who was studying at EHBS, to come pastor them. Although he did not then accept, the Shibecha congregation was beginning to see how they could go on without the missionaries. In 1968, Kondo did respond to the call.

The final decision for Shenks to move to Kushiro was worked out in consultation with all parties concerned: the two congregations involved, the church conference, the Bible school students, the missionaries, and the mission board. By midsummer, plans for the Shenk family move to Kushiro were more concrete. Ruth wrote in a July 12, 1967, letter to family and friends, "Kushiro church is eager for us to work with them in starting a new work in the city. We plan to move this fall as we can find a good location and suitable housing."

Shenk family moves to Tottori

In deciding upon the exact location for the new work, city planning, demography, and the locations of other churches were taken into account. It became apparent that the property already owned by Tsurugadai Church was not a suitable place for a new church, with four other churches in the immediate vicinity. However, no churches were farther west across the Kushiro River, and that area was not only growing rapidly but also part of definite city planning.

Tsurugadai Church members and several missionaries in addition to Shenks were part of the search. Suitable housing could not be found for rent or sale, so the decision was made to buy land and build. Finally, on September 26, through the connections of Tsurugadai member Tomoko Sasaki, property was found "which appeared to all involved to be very nearly ideal" (Ralph Buckwalter, September 27, 1967, letter to Wilbert Shenk).

Mennonite Board of Missions subsequently gave approval for and financed the purchase of the land located that day and the construction of a house for the Shenk family. After the land was purchased in September, house construction proceeded rapidly, and in the middle of December the Shenk family moved into the completed house. The house that Shenks built was used as the meeting place of the emerging Tottori Christian fellowship until September 1970, when a church building was completed, and as a missionary dwelling until May 1983. No longer needed as a missionary residence, the property was sold in November 1983.

Tottori work begins

Joining the Shenk family in the new work in Tottori was Tsurugadai Church member and EHBS student Akira Mimoto. The decision for Mimoto to work with Shenks in Tottori was

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processed through EHBS, the conference, and Tsurugadai Church. Charles had taught Mimoto in EHBS classes, but deep fellowship among the three co-workers began only as they set out to work together (Shenks, April 3, 1986, interview; Mimotos, April 10, 1986, interview). On January 28, 1968, Mimoto also moved to the Tottori area.

Shenks "went with a plan" (Charles, interview) to Tottori to do everything with Mimoto. Their approach was to meet the needs of the community, make friends, talk things over, and use English classes to come into contact with people. They had no special target group in mind and intended to be a community church (Ruth, interview).

On February 9 and 15, 1968, the team visited approximately 400 houses in the immediate neighborhood with greetings, tracts, and handbills telling of their purpose for being in Tottori, noting some of the expected activities, and announcing the first meeting. This survey turned up no Christians. There was no core group of Christians at Tottori except for the three co-workers, so even though the Tottori work was begun with a Japanese colleague, the beginnings there were actually slower and more difficult for Shenks than at Shibecha, where they had gone alone but found Christians waiting (Shenks, interview).

English classes began on February 13, and then on February 18 came the long-anticipated first house meeting. Attendance that first Sunday evening was 21, including "middle school students, youth, middle-aged mothers, one whole family unit, our contractor, and a man close to 60" (Charles, February 1986, annual report to MBM). Eight attended the second meeting on March 17. Sunday school began February 25 with 17 present.

From April, both the Sunday evening house meeting and Sunday morning Sunday school met twice a month. From September, the Sunday evening meeting became weekly, with an introduction to Christianity course twice a month and Bible study twice a month. Charles and Mimoto alternated leadership. These meetings were listed in the Tsurugadai Church calendar as the Shenk House Meeting or the Tottori House Meeting. At this point, Tsurugadai Church still "considered Tottori as being under their wing" (Ruth, interview).

When is a church?

By the fall of 1968, an emerging Christian fellowship was evident. Charles and Ruth reported in a November 25, 1968, letter to family and friends:

> *Instead of being simply a gathering of persons interested in Christianity, it is now a group with identity and one with which we can enjoy Christian fellowship . . . . We are eagerly seeking the will of God now as to when to hold the first baptism here and when and how to organize. In conversation about Tottori these days with co-worker Mimoto, pastor Tanase of the Tsurugadai Church and other interested brethren, the key question is "When is a church?"*

Along with the question of when the new church would be born, another notable development was with Shenks' co-worker Mimoto, who was becoming dissatisfied with staying in his post-office job which was taking an increasing amount of his time. He began to consider quitting in order to be involved full time in church work, making a living through part-time English teaching. The question of Mimoto's livelihood was further complicated by the fact that on June 15, 1969, he would marry Chisako Arita and then have a family to support. Thus a fourth member joined the church-planting team.

Yet another development in the spring of 1969 was initial thinking about a church building. As the group developed at Shenks' house, Shenks and Mimoto began to see the need for the church to have a place of its own. MBM gave approval to a church-building project. Finding suitable available land was a difficult process, but in August 1969, land was purchased at Tottori Odori 6 Chome, not far from the missionary house at Tottori Odori 8 Chome. This land was a gift from Tsurugadai Church.

Tottori Church is born

On November 23, 1969, Tottori Church was officially organized, and the first baptismal ceremony was held. Three new Christians plus five Christians who transferred in became the charter members of the new church.

At the first members' meeting on December 7, decisions included establishing a building fund. The January members' meeting was a kind of turning point for the young church (Shenks, interview), as some major items were discussed: beginning Sunday morning worship services in February, the building project, and church leadership. The question of how Mimoto should work was considered, whether he should continue as a part-time church worker or become full time. The group was asking, "What kind of church should we be?" (Charles, January 1970 memo).

The new, little church made progress on both the leadership question and the building project. After much consultation, it was announced at the July members' meeting that Mimoto would quit his post-office job of 14 years and take up full-time work for Tottori Church as of October 1, 1970. Shenks had given much encouragement for quitting the post-office job, while Tsurugadai pastor Tanase had urged more caution (Mimoto, April 10, 1986, interview). At the point that Mimoto began full-time church work he began to be designated "pastor."

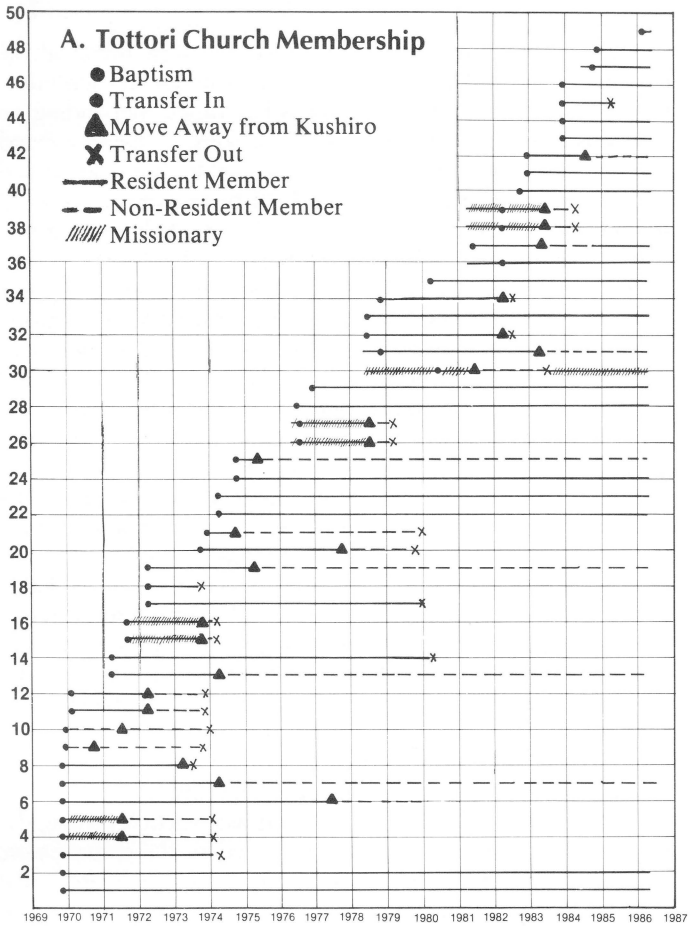
At the beginning, Mimoto earned all of his family's support through English teaching. Later the church began to give some token support, especially after the building debt was paid off, but he has continued to earn the bulk of the family's income in English teaching. In 1985 three fourths of the Mimoto's income came from English teaching and a fourth came from the church, but that fourth represented half of the church's expenditures (Mimoto, April 10, 1986, interview).

As for the church-building project, on July 26, 1970, the groundbreaking ceremony for the church/parsonage was held, and the building was ready for use in September. MBM provided a 2,000,000-yen gift toward the 4,116,867-yen building, and the remainder was paid with accumulated building-fund offerings and loans from members.

Meanwhile, new members were being added, two by transfer in 1969, two by baptism in 1970, and two by baptism in 1971, bringing the membership to 14 in a year and a half. April 1970 to March 1971 was the peak year in Sunday attendance, with a 17.6 average that has never again been reached in Tottori history. Mimoto commented on the high attendance of those early years that there was a certain newness and excitement back then. Besides highly committed members and seekers, some people came out of mere curiosity because it was rare and special to have a Christian church—and foreigners—in the community (April 10, 1986, interview).

Continuing missionary involvement

Then in the summer of 1971 came time for the Shenk family to go on furlough to the USA. The little church seemed to be going strong, but both the church and Pastor Mimoto did not yet feel ready to carry all the responsibility on their own without missionary help (Shenks, interview, Mimoto, April 15, 1986, interview). The church was weak not only financially—



with debt on the building—but also spiritually. Although Shenks and Mimotos had been co-workers, in actuality, Charles Shenk's influence had been strong, and, in Japan, personal relationships and personal ties are very important. The church felt much anxiety about being left with Mimoto as the sole leader by default (Mimoto, April 15, 1986, interview).

At this transition point, Shenks regret that Mimoto was not designated in some special way as leader. "We really failed. We Mennonites don't insist on ordination, but we do believe in the biblical example of laying on of hands. There should have been a commissioning" (Charles, interview).

Times of leadership change are crucial, and this was a difficult period for Tottori Church, "Can we keep going with Mimoto?" the church and Mimoto wondered (Mimoto, April 15, 1986, interview), but they did keep on for several months on their own. Then the conference executive committee assigned missionaries Eugene and Louella Blosser, returning to Japan after an extended furlough, to Tottori. After a gap of two and a half months, missionaries were again on the scene. Blossers arrived in Kushiro in August 1971 and worked with Tottori for two years.

Blossers were appointed to Tottori in spite of reservations raised by MBM administrator Wilbert Shenk about maintaining missionary presence at Tottori. He wrote that he thought the pattern had been evolving in Japan "whereby the church would be making good use of missionary personnel in extension and development but would assume full responsibility for pastoral leadership" (November 25, 1970, letter to Charles). Deciding when a church is ready to stand on its own is difficult. In the case of Tottori, Tottori's anxiety and perceived weakness took precedence over mission theory, and Tottori's request for help was honored by the conference when missionaries became available.

Mimoto and Eugene shared the preaching and teaching load, and the two couples were supposedly jointly carrying the responsibility as the original team had done, but already the missionary role was changing. "Shenks did pioneer evangelism. Blossers helped Tottori Church do pioneer evangelism," explained Mimoto about the difference in working with Shenks and Blossers (April 15, 1986, interview).

In September 1973, Blossers moved on to new work in Hiroo, and from that point on, Tottori Church has been clearly on its own without missionary leadership. Mimoto, from the time that Blossers left, has continued to do the bulk of the preaching and teaching.

In 1976 a new era of Tottori Church/missionary relationship began, with Overseas Mission Associates Steve and Karen Moshier Shenk from 1976 to 1978, Mary Beyler from 1978 to 1981, and Randy and Mary Roth from 1981 to 1983 assisting in the Tottori Church while earning most or all of their own support in English teaching. Since 1983 Mary Beyler has been in Kushiro as a general missionary and continues to relate to Tottori Church on a regular basis, although she no longer lives in the Tottori area.

Tottori's history charted

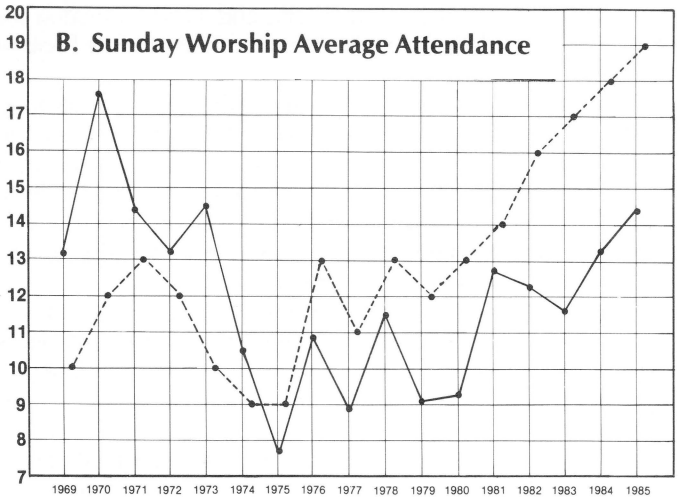
Figures compiled from data in the church's Annual Members' Meeting Materials illustrate some aspects of the growth and development of Tottori Church from its establishment in 1969 until the present. (In the chart, transfer numbers recognized by the church as guest members before membership was formally transferred are represented as members from the time they began regular attendance at Tottori. In the graphs, the church year runs from April of one year through March of the next year. For example, 1985 on the graphs represents April 1985 through March 1986.)

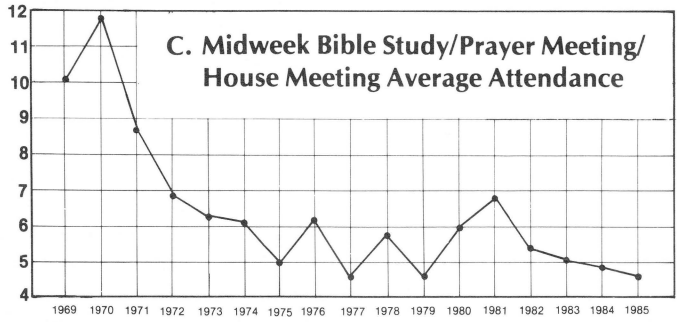
Numbers can't and don't tell the whole story of Tottori. On the records, Tottori in 1986 is a small church of only 25 members, but almost twice that many have been members. Since the 1969 beginning with eight members, a total of 49 people have joined Tottori either through baptism or transfer, but of those 49, only 19 remain as resident members in April 1986. Tottori Church has sent out 30 people, 61 percent of those who have been members. Of those 30, 23 have transferred their membership to other churches, six retain ties with Tottori although they live elsewhere, and only one has dropped out of contact with any church.

Tottori's highest number of resident members is 19, reached in 1986; the lowest was nine in 1975 and 1976. There has been only one year, 1976, in which no member moved away or transferred out of the church. In the future, there will continue to be much movement out of and into the church, because Kushiro's position as a not-so-large regional city, far removed from the center of Japan, means many job transfers for Kushiro residents. There are hopeful signs, though, such as a current member who changed jobs in order to have a job based in Kushiro and another member who has resisted transfer in order to stay longer at Tottori.

Only Akira and Chisako Mimoto have been members of Tottori for all 16½ years. The next longest resident members have been at Tottori for 12 years. Other than those five, everyone has been a member for ten years or less. Tottori continues to be a young church.

Of the 49 people who have been members of Tottori Church, 25 were baptized and 24 transferred in. In its 16 years,





Tottori has averaged 1.5 baptism per year. There have been six years with no baptisms: 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1984, and 1985. Now, for the first time in Tottori's history, there have been no baptisms for two years in a row, a matter of great concern, even though membership and average Sunday attendance are now steadily increasing after years of ups and downs (Mimoto 1986:2). Attendance levels in the mid-1980s are finally reapproaching the levels of the early 1970s, after the lean years of 1974 to 1983.

Another point of concern is that in the early years, Sunday attendance averaged higher than the number of resident members, but since 1975 that has been reversed. The newness and excitement of the beginning years have worn off. Midweek meeting attendance has never averaged as high as in the first four years. Sunday school hit its peak in the mid-seventies and has now dwindled in recent years, a phenomenon seen in many churches, as school-related activities and cram schools compete with the church for Sunday time (Mimoto, April 10, 1986, interview).

Flexibility in program

Throughout the years, Tottori Church has introduced various program changes to meet the varying needs of members and seekers. One such example is evening worship, which was held to accommodate members who work on Sundays and can't attend Sunday morning services. English Bible class is an example of an activity cooperating missionaries have been able to contribute to the Tottori schedule. Students include Pastor Mimoto, another church member who is an English teacher, and other English teachers at various stages in their interest in Christianity.

Attendance figures for women's meetings were not available for some years, but Tottori Church has maintained such meetings from the beginning. The focus has varied, depending on who was attending: church women, seekers, or neighborhood women. Attendance figures are not available, but student and young adult meetings have been held to provide activities of special interest for those age-groups and to try to keep youth involved with the church beyond the Sunday school years.

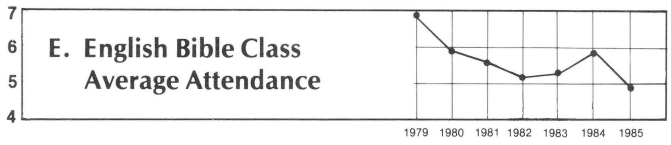
Tottori Church itself began as a house meeting, and house meetings have continued to play an important role in nurturing both members and seekers and in reaching out to members' non-Christian family and friends. In the late 1970s, attendance at the midweek Bible study/prayer meeting was dropping, so from 1980 house meetings became part of, not just something alongside of, the regular midweek schedule.

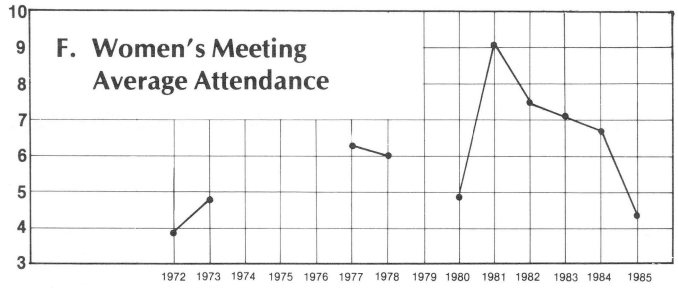
Tottori Church has used various methods to reach out. The church has carried out literature evangelism. Now and then, special meetings with outside speakers have been held, providing opportunity to invite people into the church who probably would not come for an ordinary service. Christmas services also serve such a purpose. English teaching by both pastor and missionaries has been an excellent way to come into contact with the community over the years. The first three baptized members got in touch with the church through English contacts. English teaching continues to be a need in Japanese society that Pastor Mimoto, as well as missionaries, can meet.

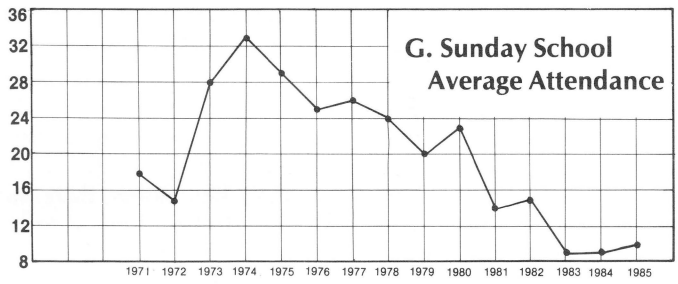
To take a closer look at how Tottori has reached people, the ways the 25 baptized members were led to the church were counted. For some, there was more than one reason that brought them. By far the most numerous point of contact was through a friend or family member, with ten people being brought to the church by friends and four by Christian family members (sister-in-law, sister–2, husband). English class contacts with a missionary or pastor brought five future members. Tracts and handbills led three people to Tottori Church. Three people came for counseling. Radio or TV broadcasts first introduced Christianity to two who eventually became Tottori members. Several came on their own, but such people are rare, for most people need a specific contact or a particular reason before taking the radical step of setting foot in a Christian church. These figures illustrate, as Stephen Neill has pointed out, that in Japan "progress comes through individual conversion and in no other way" (1964:464).

From the number of people brought to the church through personal contacts, the importance of the members in Tottori's pilgrimage is clear. Evangelism is everyone's task, not just the job of the pastor and missionaries. From the beginning of Mennonite mission in Hokkaido, the mission operated with the vision of lay involvement of committed believers. Early missionary Ralph Buckwalter wrote, "Christ is being made known in many ways, but the most effective evangelism is accomplished through the consistent, daily witness of born-again believers" (1957:168).

Following in this tradition, Tottori Church expects a high level of commitment of its members, who serve in many ways, whether teaching Sunday school or writing the weekly and monthly bulletins or leading the worship service or hosting and leading house meetings or taking occasional turns preaching or bringing friends and relatives. In a small church, there is not much chance just to sit back and listen. Outside the church, in touching the lives of many different people and in living a dynamic Christian witness, and inside the church, in sharing the responsibility to nurture each other, lay involvement of committed members has been crucial in the life of Tottori Church.







Tottori's four periods

Charting the history of Tottori Church for the fifteenth anniversary celebration, members noted four periods in Tottori's pilgrimage: first, from 1967 to 1969, opening evangelism; then from 1970 to 1979, church formation centered on women; next, from 1980 to mid-1984, church formation centered on young people; and now, from mid-1984 on, Christian family-centered church formation.

In discussing these periods in Tottori's history, Pastor Mimoto commented (April 10, 1986, interview) that personal relations are very important in Japanese society. In the 1970s a number of women with influential personalities gave women a strong voice in the formation of the church in those years. They helped to attract other women to the church. Likewise, in the early eighties a strong core of young people developed, and they in turn attracted other young people. Then those young people began to marry, and Tottori Church was transformed by 1984 into a church with Christian families at the center. As of April 1986 six Christian couples make up 12 of the 19 resident members.

Church growth studies have identified housewives as the group most receptive to the gospel in Japan, and C. Peter Wagner recommends that some urban churches "experiment with an outreach program directing 70 percent of the effort to women, 20 percent to youth and 10 percent to company men" (1984:169). Tottori Church has never consciously concentrated on any one target group, although interestingly enough, two periods of Tottori's history did focus on women and youth. Located in a regional city with much job transfer in and out, Tottori may not have the option of designing its program for any one group and rather must remain, as it has been from its beginning, flexible, open, and ready to welcome anyone receptive to the gospel.

Conclusion

Initiative for the Tottori venture came from the Kushiro church and Bible school, but MBM approval was sought at all steps along the way that involved mission people and funds. Decisions were made in Kushiro by the people involved: the members of the existing church, the church-planting team, and then the members of the new church. As for the relationship between the Tsurugadai and Tottori congregations, the parent church provided the vision for the new church as well as one member of the church-planting team, although the day-in-and-day-out labor was done rather exclusively by the Tottori coworkers. Tsurugadai Church gave concrete help in locating the missionary-house land and contributing the church land as well as moral support and encouragement in attendance at special occasions and advice along the way. The two churches maintain independent existences, but there has been continued cooperation over the years.

Tottori Church has not grown spectacularly; however, it has grown far more than the current 1986 statistics alone would indicate, since half of those who have been members have transferred out. Tottori has had lean years, slow years. Tottori went through a leadership crisis with the departure of the pioneering missionaries. But it has survived those tough times, steadily and patiently developing into the balanced group including six Christian families that it is today. Pastor Mimoto has matured from Bible school student/lay worker to a caring, flexible, knowledgeable shepherd of a constantly changing flock. Tottori is a church where all the members are expected to use their gifts, where it is necessary for all the members to share in the mission and nurture of the local church.

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1986 "1985 Nendo o Furikaette" ("Looking Back at 1985") in 1986 Annual Members' Meeting Materials of Tottori Church

Shenk, Charles and Ruth
Personal files, in which were found all the letters, reports, and memos referred to in the paper

Tottori Church
Records, including Kyokaiin Sokai Shiryo (Annual Members' Meeting Materials) and Geppo (Monthly Bulletins)

I am grateful to Charles and Ruth Shenk for interview time on April 3, 1986, and to Akira and Chisako Mimoto on April 10, 1986, and Akira Mimoto again on April 15, 1986.

Editorial

If we must reduce the message of Jesus to one word, that word is *basileia*, i.e., God's reign or rule. This is a power word. Jesus launched his public ministry with a challenge to his audience to choose between a world controlled by a power which would ultimately destroy them and a world governed by the power of God which alone could guarantee life.

Jesus' inaugural message as recorded in Luke 4:18-19 casts his mission in dramatic power-encounter language. Jesus does not offer a detailed sociopolitical critique of the Galilean situation of his day. He did not need to. Those were troubled times; public discontent ran deep. Jesus was speaking into a situation ripe for exploitation by Zealots and demagogues.

In presenting his program Jesus did not bid for the support of a particular class or group. He presented his ministry as a response to a society shot through with oppression, injustice, brokenness, bigotry, hypocrisy, disease, and sin. Jesus challenged the very basis of society and called people to another order. Such social and personal unwholesomeness was the result of the influence of another kingdom—the reign of Satan. Jesus promised men and women liberation from all forms of captivity.

One of the illusions humans cherish most is that each individual is autonomous, having freedom to choose to pay allegiance to a power or remain independent. The heart of the devil's proposition in Genesis 3 is that humans would not be subject to creaturely finitude symbolized by death. The ironic turn of that story is that it is precisely the devil who is the "apostle" of death. Indeed the devil cannot give either life or freedom. Yet by nature the human being is dependent on some external power. Autonomy is constitutionally impossible.

A corollary of the foregoing is that we become like the power which masters our lives. The reports of spirit worship, whether in Brazil or anywhere else, underscore the ways in which the worshiper becomes like the object worshiped. Those who find in technology their ultimate values ultimately become dominated by technology. Those who serve an ideology are shaped by the values of that system as they allow those values to become ultimate in their lives.

The Bible presents us with two possibilities, two powers. Evil is that power which opposes God. Evil enslaves, oppresses, and ultimately destroys. By contrast the nature of God is love, that is, the power which builds up, liberates, restores, gives life. In John's Gospel Jesus describes himself in a series of contrasting pictures: instead of the thief who wrecks terror and destruction on the victims, Jesus brings abundant life; rather than the marauder who scatters the flock, Jesus declares himself to be "the good shepherd"; instead of being a hired hand who tends the flock carelessly, Jesus is the shepherd who risks life itself to insure the welfare of every member of the flock (John 10:1-15).

I have contrasted the power of evil and the power of God. But we can pay lip service to the power of God while continuing to understand power according to the patterns and tactics of this world. We are still titillated by powerful displays and dramatic gestures; we thrill to the promise of power that will enhance our own egos. We eagerly fall into line with a gospel that promises wealth and health. All of this is patently not evidence of God's power at work in our lives.

Arthur C. McGill pierces to the heart of the matter: "The distinctive mark of God's power is service and self-giving." It is a power which, according to the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13, works quietly and in apparent obscurity but brings about profound constructive change. For it restores to wholeness and right relationship with God as Creator who has now become Redeemer and will ultimately bring all things to their completion in Jesus Christ.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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MISSION FOCUS

Mennonite Ministry Among the Dida Harrists of Ivory Coast

JAMES R. KRABILL

Sixty years ago a French colonial administrator paid a visit to the Dida people living in Yocoboué, a village situated then as now ten miles from the Gulf of Guinea in south-central Ivory Coast. Gathering the inhabitants together for a village consultation, the administrator began his remarks by noting the poor quality of stools the villagers were using as chairs at the meeting. "Those rickety things don't look very comfortable," he told his listeners. "And you know, you don't have to live in such misery. In my country, *la France*, we have great big sofa chairs so soft that when you sit down on them you sink right into their fluffy cushions. Now how many of you—if you had the choice—would rather sit on chairs like that?" The crowd responded with resounding approval. "Then you shall hear from me again!" he assured them before departing.

Within weeks the white man returned bringing with him an enormous supply of machetes, buckets, pickaxes and shovels—and a hefty gang of mean-looking African overseers, brandishing sticks and whips well worn from apparent previous use elsewhere. The villagers were astounded. "But where are the sofa chairs?" they wanted to know. "Sofa chairs?" said the administrator, acting surprised, "Oh yes, the sofa chairs! Well, you see, there's a small problem, because to get those chairs from the coast into a bush village like Yocoboué it will first require having a decent road. I have brought with me all the necessary tools and a group of overseers who will help you to get your road as quickly as possible." Three years later, the people of Yocoboué had two things they had not ordered: broken backs and a 30-mile stretch of dirt road. The fluffy-cushioned sofa chairs never arrived.

People living in Yocoboué today chuckle when they recount how their grandparents were so unscrupulously duped by the "sweet mouth" of the white man. Were this an isolated incident, one would almost be tempted to chuckle with them. Unfortunately, there were other cases as well—cases frequent and serious enough for the white man to have acquired the reputation for being a "wolf in sheep's clothing," a man who "speaks with two mouths" (saying one thing here and another there).

It is thus all the more amazing that in July 1979 leaders of the Harrist Church[1] in this same village of Yocoboué should have requested the services of North American Mennonites in providing biblical instruction to the youth and future leaders of the movement. Such an invitation can in fact be thought of in no other way than as a modern-day miracle, the proof that God is still fully committed to his ageless project of bringing unlikely peoples together.

Building confidence with persons who have been endlessly tricked and mistreated is not an easy task. It is first and foremost an enormous trust—one which represents for the 75-year-old Dida Harrist Church a landmark commitment of considerable historical importance and one which dare never be treated lightly, taken for granted, or violated in any way. Consequently, we have proceeded cautiously in our work with the Dida Harrists, concentrating far more on cultivating relationships than on "developing program" as such.

One preacher with whom I have worked closely since 1981 was asked not long ago what he gets out of his relationship with me. His response: "My relationship with James is like that of a husband and wife in marriage. You don't ask who gives or gets what. There is a deep secret in marriage that you can't explain. And that's the way it is between the two of us."

These are not earth-shattering words, but given the context, they are reassuring ones. They are words of friendship, words of growing trust, and words inconceivable only a few years ago, which in 1987 give us courage to move—cautiously—forward.

Three aspects of our ministry among Dida Harrists[2]

Life and work in the village of Yocoboué (1982-1985)

The initial invitation that our Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) team received in July 1979 from the Harrist Church in Dida territory came in the form of a specific request to provide biblical instruction to the church's youth in order to prepare them for roles of responsible leadership in the years ahead.[3] With this neatly packaged job description my wife and I accepted the assignment and moved with our family in the spring of 1982 to live and work in the village of Yocoboué.

I have since learned that few expatriates ministering in Africa ever do anything even vaguely recognizable to what they had originally envisioned. And our life in Yocoboué was no exception. As it turned out, health services in the region were far from adequate for meeting local needs; our home, consequently, ended up serving as a mini-clinic providing four to five medical interventions per day. Local educational opportunities were likewise less than ideal, and so from our home we

James R. Krabill and his wife, Jeanette, were appointed in 1976 by Mennonite Board of Missions to serve among African Independent Churches in West Africa.

ran a small bookstore, had a revolving library service, and occasionally conducted literacy classes for church leaders who had earlier missed the opportunity to perfect this skill.

The number and quality of transportation vehicles on the roads was another matter deserving some attention, so our car frequently served as ambulance, hearse, pickup truck, and bush taxi. We transported to the hospital in one memorable week one dying woman (20 miles), a second with blood streaming from her nose and mouth (42 miles, a trip made from midnight to 5:00 a.m.), and a third woman in labor for ten hours, trying desperately to rid herself of baby twins refusing stubbornly to pop out (34 miles).

Bleeding noses and overdue babies are, of course, not the usual subjects one expects to encounter in a missiological review. Nor do I intend to dwell unduly on such matters in this brief presentation. I suspect, however, that we only kid ourselves when we underestimate their significance by excluding them altogether from our discussions of what it means to serve Christ in the world.

Jesus is—and must remain—our model for ministry. And wiping bloody noses out of the gospel accounts of his earthly ministry would leave us with a dismally truncated narrative indeed! The longer we were in Yocoboué, the more we felt that much—perhaps even the large part—of our ministry was taking place not in the classroom but on our front porch, in visits to neighboring courtyards, and at 2:00 in the morning on flash trips to the hospital. This unstructured aspect of our life in the village was for us the most demanding and, at times, the most frustrating of all activities occupying our time. But it will be, I am convinced, for many of our Dida brothers and sisters the only souvenir to be kept of all the time and energy we spent in their midst.

Bible instruction

My first "systematic" Bible teaching began in the front room of our Yocoboué house with two or three interested students reading together, verse by verse, through the Gospel of Mark. We were not at all certain where this would lead us, but we worked with what we had and soon requests from other Harrist communities began coming our way.

Eventually during our three years in Yocoboué, thirteen villages received some form of regular (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) TEE-style instruction. With the completion in 1985 of our Yocoboué assignment, Dida Harrists further into the interior requested that the teaching program be repeated for a circuit of villages unable to participate in the first round of studies. And so in March 1986, the Krabill family moved 60 miles north to Divo (population 50,000), which presently serves as home base for itinerant instruction provided in six new teaching centers.

At our first meeting with Yocoboué Harrists in 1979, we inquired of the elderly "Superior Preacher" how long a program he envisioned for the instruction we were asked to provide. "The Bible is a complicated book," he responded after considerable reflection, "and I don't see how you can cover it in less than three years." With no other clues as to the content of what should be taught, I attempted to design and implement a curriculum with this three-year timetable in mind. A résumé of the program as it eventually unfolded can be outlined as follows:

Year 1:

a. Introductory materials (learning books of the Bible, acquaintance with maps, reasons why and skills on how to study the Bible, presentation of basic hermeneutical principles).

b. A verse-by-verse study of Mark[4] (presenting Jesus, the center of our faith).

c. A 21-lesson Old Testament survey (using the "People of God" theme—subdivided chronologically into seven chapters: "In the Beginning," "God Chooses a People," "God Makes a Covenant with His People," etc.—but attempting at the same time to present briefly each Old Testament book in its order and historical context).

Year 2:

a. A six-week study—using primarily the Sermon on the Mount—aimed at showing how Jesus fulfills the Old (the previous study) and lays the foundation for the New (to be studied next).

b. A verse-by-verse examination of the Acts of the Apostles (with parallel homework assignments requiring the students to dig out their own local church history).

Year 3:

a. A thematic study of the Epistles (attempting to demonstrate in each lesson some aspect of the work of Christ in the life of the church).

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b. A survey of church history (from Acts to the present) with an introduction to various other Independent Churches around Africa.

Throughout the entire survey I attempted to develop, somewhat simultaneously, two parallel themes: one related to "The People of God" (Israel/Church) and a second related to the central figure of "Jesus Christ." In the section dealing with introductory materials I asked the question: "Whose story does the Bible tell?" In Mark: "Who does Jesus claim to be?" In the Old Testament: "Who are Jesus' ancestors and what traditions do they pass down to him?" In the Sermon on the Mount: "What does Jesus teach about 'true faith' in contrast to his own (and our!) traditions?" In Acts: "Who believed Jesus and what did they do about it?" In the epistles: "In what ways is Jesus still alive and active in the life of the church today?" And in church history: "What struggles has the church faced down through the ages in attempting to remain faithful to Jesus?"

It should be obvious that the organizing principle in the development of this study program was the biblical story itself—more, that is, than any particular issues arising out of Dida life and culture. Nonetheless, I did try in preparing each session to ask myself the more contextualized question, What is the one most important lesson emerging from this passage that the Lord would want to teach Dida Harrists living in this time and place? Specific African issues were thus addressed one by one on a weekly basis, not as an arbitrary list of hobby horses preoccupying the expatriate Bible teacher but as issues emerging out of the life and struggles of God's people whose story "has been preserved as an example for us" in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 10:11).

Perhaps the most satisfying personal experience that I had in trying to implement this type of approach was the study done in the book of Acts. That study proved particularly intriguing for at least two reasons: first, because the book's features hold special interest to Christians in the African context—questions of spirit/demon-possession, confrontation with magicians, intertribal conflict and racism (Jewish/Samaritan/"god-fearer"/Gentile), the law/grace controversy, the role of North Africans in these first days of early church expansion. Second, the parallels are so striking between the Acts account and the history of how Christian faith came to the Dida people through the Prophet Harris 75 years ago. To assist the students in appreciating these similarities I assigned them weekly bits of homework which touched roughly on the subject in Acts under current study and required them to become "little Lukes" by doing research among the old people of the village. Some of these findings were assembled into a 23-page booklet given to each student as a kind of (local) "early church history," or as one student put it, "Acts of the Dida Apostles."

At the completion of the Acts study, I worked with the students to produce a three-hour biblical-historical drama for presentation to the entire village. The drama attempted to draw parallels between the ministries of the Apostle Paul and the Prophet Harris. Thus it featured two major parts: seven scenes from the life of the apostle (depicted as Christ's messenger to the Mediterranean world) and five scenes from Harris's ministry (Christ's messenger to the Ivory Coast), taking the viewers chronologically from Jerusalem to Yocoboué, where the play ended with a reenactment of the village's first worship service in late 1913.

Collection of historical and liturgical materials

In 1980 MBM's Overseas Ministries Divisional Committee adopted a statement providing guidelines for "Ministry Among African Independent Churches." This statement affirmed, among other things, MBM's desire to foster dialogue by respecting history: "All peoples prize their history—the story of their founder, the vision which gave rise to their movement and continues to infuse meaning into their existence. We must be prepared to travel with a people into their past if we are to understand their present and future."

My own interest in "traveling with the Dida people into their past" has been stimulated by two major factors. On one hand, the larger, rather suspicious national context of our presence among the Dida Harrists[5] has made of our work a kind of test-case experience and pushed us, perhaps unconsciously but also quite deliberately, in the direction of carrying on a ministry which demonstrates our desire to respect, promote, and assist in preserving local Harrist history and identity. On the other hand, a more personally inspired factor grows out of my own curiosity to understand better the impact left by the Prophet Harris on the Dida people coming directly out of traditional African religion into a whole new existence structured around faith in the God of Jesus Christ.

This aspect of my work during the past five years has taken a variety of forms:

a. Interviewing numerous elderly people throughout Dida territory in order to reconstruct the church's early history.

b. Preparing with Harrist preacher Kobli Alphonse a booklet in the Dida language containing some important pieces of early Harrist liturgy including prayers, creeds, and a lengthy catechism. This booklet, published in collaboration with the local Wycliffe translation team, is being used as a part of the alphabetization program, preparing Harrists for the Dida Bible to be completed within the next few years.

c. Organizing several activities to promote among the Harrist youth—who have been taught by non-Harrists to despise their identity—an increased appreciation of their heritage, past and present. An example here would be the "spiritual pilgrimage" we took as a class to Kraffy—the small ocean-front fishing village where the first generation of Harrists received the prophet's baptism in 1913-1914. None of my students had ever been to Kraffy, though they had heard the name thousands of times since childhood in preaching and through the church's rich hymnody. We decided to make the trip "as the old folks had done"—by canoe (across the wide lagoon) and by foot (45 miles following the shoreline from Grand Lahou to Kraffy and back again). News of our intentions spread to other villages where I conducted Bible studies, and ultimately several students from four teaching centers joined in making the journey. The trip took us three days, nearly killed the badly out-of-shape *professeur*, but nonetheless proved to be an unforgettable spiritual experience for all those who participated.

d. Last, compiling and classifying old Harrist songs, composed for the most part between 55 and 75 years ago and which capture perhaps better than any other existing documents the "early church faith" of the Dida Harrist people. Efforts here have consisted thus far of collecting (making a complete list), recording (preserving on cassette tape), transcribing (into the Dida language), and translating (into French) as many as possible of the hymns currently in use among the Dida Harrist people. With nearly 600 songs collected to date, four cassettes have been professionally produced (with the aid of technicians from Ivory Coast's national radio station) and offered to music lovers for a reasonable price. Copies of these cassettes have been donated to the radio archives for use in nationally diffused religious broadcasting. A Dida Harrist hymnbook is currently in the works—a resource which should be a valuable tool in the hands of choir directors and lead singers

who come together from all over Dida territory for regular bimonthly choir rehearsals to practice and pass on the many hymns of the church.

God's work among Dida Harrists

One of my Harrist co-workers was amused when he heard that I was writing a report on our assignment among the Dida. "When a fisherman falls from his canoe and drowns in the river," he reminded me, "you must wait until his body comes to the surface before you can take a good look at his belly to see whether or not he drank too much palm wine before going fishing!" He paused, then added with a chuckle, "In your case, the fisherman has barely fallen into the water!"

While we are waiting for the fisherman's body to surface, we should in conclusion at least credit God's unrelenting Spirit with a few rather remarkable achievements:

- Two peoples, in this case black and white, with a 75-year history of suspicion and mistrust, have taken the first feeble steps toward friendship.
- One North American Mennonite family, accustomed to some rather subdued forms of worship, have learned not only to appreciate, but to love deeply the expressions of faith as sung and danced by members of Christ's kingdom living in another place.
- What was perceived only a few years back as a risky test-case experiment is considered by slowly growing numbers today as a model experience to be repeated elsewhere.
- Last, regardless of the role Mennonites may or may not actually play in assisting the Harrist movement in the future—a few Harrists have already come to understand more fully by our presence among them that the Bible is not exclusively *le papier des blancs* "the white man's paper"; the work of Christ, far from being limited to white folks and their world, extends to include persons of black skin living in Ivory Coast, West Africa; and what God is working at through his church is not an ethnic project but a cosmic one, unifying diverse peoples who are then capable in mutual respect of living together, studying together, worshiping together, and creating together a small but significant local chapter of Christ's coming multicolored, multinational kingdom.

Notes

1. The Harrist Church is one of an estimated 7,000 new religious movements to be found in Africa today. The church's name and existence derive from William Wadé Harris, the Liberian prophet-evangelist whose 1913-1915 ministry in Ivory Coast produced a mass movement of at least 150,000 converts (cf. Haliburton (1971) and Shank (1980). Present membership figures for the Harrist Church stand somewhere between 200,000 and 400,000 (including children).

2. This article is a condensed version of my 1986 paper (cf. bibliography below) which describes in much fuller detail the various aspects of our Dida Harrist ministry.

3. Our Ivory Coast MBM team has from the outset consisted of two couples, David and Wilma Shank and James and Jeanette Krabill. The Dida invitation referred to here came to the MBM team as a whole, but the Shanks, working out of a base in Abidjan, Ivory Coast's capital city, have carried on a broader ministry described by Shank (1986:7-10).

4. Mark was chosen over the other Gospels for its shortness, its lively style, and its sensitivity to new believers of non-Jewish origin. Cf. Neill (1972:55), who writes: "The way in which a writer plans his book is largely determined by the readers for whom his work is intended. We can see that Mark is writing for Gentiles, probably Gentile Christians, for whom he must carefully explain Jewish customs (7:3-4). We can only infer his purpose in writing; but the guess may be hazarded that this little book was intended as a manual for preachers. This is the minimum that they must pass on, if non-Christians who have become interested are to know who it is whom they are called to believe, and are to be led on step by step to a faith that cannot be shaken."

5. This national Harrist context and the delicate nature of MBM's relationship to it is well described by Shank (1986).

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Development and Mission

PETER J. KROEKER

The terms "development" and "mission" have been used to cover a large spectrum of activities. Both have been used in contexts other than the church, but in this article they will be discussed in the context of the mandate of the church, especially as it relates to the activity of the church in foreign settings.

Development

As children grow, learn, and mature, their change of status within society is often referred to as child development. When a town or city changes the use of land to more productive or intensive purposes, this too is called development. Even some churches, when seeking to increase their membership or build larger facilities, have committees for church development. When social agencies develop programs for the integration and education of the people in a neighborhood, they call their activity community development.

In the past several decades Western states and their financial institutions have lent billions of dollars to "underdeveloped" nations of the third world for their development. This development has caused severe strains to the economies of these nations as they sought to find hard currency for the payment of interest and principle. The economies of some of these nations are in shambles. Only the intervention of the International Monetary Fund has staved off bankruptcy, and the price paid was a partial loss of self-determination.

The anti-development feelings by some Latin-American delegates to the Wheaton '83 Conference on "The Church in Response to Human Need" were so intense that they requested that the word not be used for any church-related projects of compassionate aid. Wayne Bragg (1983:71ff.) presented a paper at the conference in which he proposed that the word "transformation" be substituted for "development" when it was to be used in the Christian context:

> *Transformation is a joint enterprise between God and man, not just a mechanistic or naturalistic process. It involves, then, a transformation of the human condition as we observe it within each of the theories; the so-called "developed" modernized world needs transformation to free itself from a secular, materialistic condition marked by broken relationships, violence, economic subjugation and devastation of nature and the "under-developed" world needs transformation from the sub-human condition of poverty, premature death, oppression, disease, fears.*

Bragg sees the development work within the context of the Christian church as part of the holistic message of the gospel. In that sense I agree. But when we break down the gospel into its component parts and identify one of them, social action as undertaken by various missions to ameliorate the human condition, the use of this term for this segment of the gospel is somewhat presumptuous.

Development in this article refers to those social actions undertaken by various Christian agencies to identify physical and material needs and to find ways whereby those needs can be met on an ongoing basis. This may involve education, consciousness raising, appropriate technology in agriculture, energy conservation or industry, preventive and curative health programs, issues of peace and justice for oppressed segments of society, and economic assistance in the development of business and industry. It does not include emergency relief or disaster rehabilitation. Nor does it cover the spread of multinational business to areas of the world where labor costs are low. It does not include bilateral programs between governments. Discussion of development in this article is restricted to the context of church-related agencies.

Mission

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary attaches many variations of meaning to "mission," depending on the context of its use. In this article it is simply "a ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith or carry on humanitarian work." This definition includes almost everything a church may want to do. It does not restrict the ministry to any specific aspect of its task. Hans Kasdorf's definition is almost as broad:

> *I have defined mission as the total redemptive task for which the Lord has placed the church into the world. That task has to do with crossing frontiers of all types, frontiers that pose barriers between the people of God and the people of the world. Once those frontiers have been crossed, the church witnesses of God's redemptive, healing, and helping grace on the other side of these frontiers. In this sense, "mission means being sent by God to love, to serve, to preach, to heal"* (1986:631).

In these definitions development is a part of mission but not its totality. Mission is not restricted to a foreign context. The redemptive task of the church is found at home and abroad.

The great commission (Matt. 28:19-20) is often quoted as an outline of the mission of the church. All too often it is used selectively to emphasize evangelism and disciple-making. It certainly includes those components, but its scope is much greater. To quote David Bosch, "The central thrust of the Great Commission is indeed aimed at disciple-making. However, that includes more than only the first stage of a two-stage programme. It includes, *simultaneously*, the challenge to practice love and uphold justice" (1983:287).

In the Gospel of John (20:21b, NIV) Jesus tells his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Jesus' commission to us includes the totality of his teaching and his relationships to other people. It goes well beyond the subject covered in this article; it includes his servanthood, the contextualized ministry, the indigenous nature of his witness, his sacrificial love. The mission of the church is as broad as the ministry of Jesus; we need to study the ministry of Jesus carefully to understand the scope of his commission to the church. Here are a few examples from the gospel record.

1. The early proclamation of Jesus himself regarding his ministry is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (4:18-19). He proclaims the theme of shalom: peace and justice in the broadest meaning of these terms. He speaks of good news for the poor, freedom for prisoners, healing for the blind, release of the oppressed, and proclamation of the year of the Lord, generally interpreted as referring to the year of Jubilee when debts are forgiven, slaves are freed, and land is restored to the dispossessed.

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2. Then we need to consider the marvelous dialogue Jesus entered into with Nicodemus as recorded in the third chapter of John (vv. 16-17): "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." Another purpose of Jesus' coming is stated clearly in this passage. It is unequivocal. He came to save humankind from the consequences of sin and give eternal life to those who believe. Bringing this message of God's love and redemption to people is evangelism. If we follow the mandate of Jesus to teach "all things," evangelism must always be a part of the mission of the church.

3. The longest sermon of Jesus recorded in the Gospels is Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5 to 7). In it, Jesus explains the new relationship between God and humankind and how we should order our spiritual lives. But he also calls attention to the relationships of people to one another. He teaches that we should love our enemies, give to the needy, and forgive and not retaliate against those who do evil. He identifies evil not only in actions but also in thoughts. The implications of the sermon are that people should practice shalom: peace and justice between people and between people and God.

4. Jesus, in discussing the great commandment with an expert in the law (Luke 10:25-37), uses the example of the Good Samaritan to illustrate how we should relate to our neighbors. His example illustrates graphically that we need to provide assistance to people we do not know personally but who are in distress. In some cases this may mean gifts of food and clothing. In others, it may well be appropriate to look to long-term development that helps people help themselves.

5. A discussion of the mission of the church as exemplified by the life and teaching of Jesus would be incomplete without Jesus' graphic description of the judgment day when the sheep are separated from the goats (Matt. 25:31-46). Here the righteous, the sheep, are the ones who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, invited the stranger into their homes, clothed the naked, looked after the sick. And these righteous ones were not even aware of having done anything for God! But the King said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (v. 40). Then those who failed to help the needy were sent to eternal punishment.

If the mission of the church is to be sent as Jesus was sent, then the mandate is broad, the message holistic. Development, relief, evangelism, and disciple-making are all components of the compassion which Jesus taught and illustrated in his daily life. If all these elements are not present in our presentation of the gospel, then our witness is incomplete and we present a fragmented gospel and a fragmented view of the nature of God.

Mennonite missions and development

My review of the historical aspects of Mennonite missions and development is limited and is intended simply to illustrate that the holistic approach is not new to our foreign outreach. It may be more applicable to some of the Mennonite mission activities than to others, but some rather general implications are to be gleaned from a brief overview.

The history of Mennonite missions shows many fine examples of missionaries' concerns for the health and education of the people to whom they ministered. The almost dramatic results of Western medicine in tribal societies had a profound effect on those who witnessed it: power to heal commanded respect and brought credibility to the God of the Westerner. The healing process in many societies was closely associated with the supernatural. No doubt the medical practitioners from the West were truly compassionate. But there is also little doubt that the medical assistance was often viewed as a means to a greater end: the salvation of souls.

Nor were education and literacy viewed purely as ends in themselves. The mission emphasis on literacy was largely dictated by the need for new believers to read the Bible and learn the essentials of the Christian faith so that they might become pastors and evangelists. This emphasis on the need for education in order to achieve church growth is underscored by the fact that bursaries for education beyond the level obtainable locally were given, almost without exception, for studies in Bible schools and seminaries rather than for studies in secular institutions.

People in tribal societies, long suppressed by colonial powers, quickly learned that the means for upward mobility and power was closely associated with education. When this principle became known and accepted, there was pressure for children to be enrolled in schools. In the schools, run by missionaries, was a golden opportunity to practice child evangelism.

These examples point to a problem often raised in the discussion of development and mission, as mentioned here in the Indian context: "The implications of evangelism within development constantly raises a problem within my context. When we entered the village . . . we were accused with the well-worn charge: 'You are doing good works in order to convert our people' " (Gnanakan, 1983:2). Perhaps there is no good way of avoiding this problem altogether. One approach would be that the benefits of development programs would not be tied to recipients having an association with the church. But this has been done in many development projects. The question arises as to how thinly development agencies can spread resources in a given society. It seems to me that the Jesus model was not tied to aid; his assistance was given freely. Nor do the sheep in the Matthew 25 passage appear to have asked about the spiritual condition of the recipients of their aid.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) asks no questions about church affiliation when giving aid. Nor is the work of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) restricted to members of the church—at least, not in all of their work locations. Such aid is not given with the intention of starting new churches. With the expansion of MCC activities to many countries of the world, it was possible to enter into joint mission projects with churches. The SEDA agricultural program at Nyanga and the PAP at Kikwit, both in Zaire, are examples of this kind of joint effort. But many, if not most, of MCC's activities were carried out in regions where Mennonite churches did not exist and ties to other churches were tenuous.

The strong presence of Mennonite aid and development as represented by MCC and MEDA tended to promote the idea that mission agencies might concentrate on evangelism and church planting and these other agencies would represent the material and physical components of a compassionate ministry. This bifurcation has served to diminish the witness of both MCC and MEDA and the Mennonite missions. I agree with Gnanakan when he addresses this as a problem in the context of other organizations:

> *What is badly needed is an understanding of the Church in the context of its function, its mission and its ministry. This itself will assist in the maintaining of the individual parts within the context of the whole. It has been unfortunate that we have had to set up purely development organizations and purely evangelistic organizations. This is a poor representation of the Body of Christ from which ministry should always proceed* (1983:5).

A similar plea for a holistic approach to mission outreach was made by Filipino Dr. Magalit when addressing the Urbana Missionary Convention: "Please do not send us missionaries who insist on a dichotomy between evangelism and social concern. . . . In the long term, unless our love is demonstrated in practical terms of helping to meet the need for daily bread, our gospel of love will sound hollow and unconvincing" (quoted by Adeney, 1984:7).

Within the Mennonite context, each of our separate agencies (MCC, MEDA, mission agencies) presents only segments of the whole gospel witness. Even when both dimensions of the gospel are represented through several agencies in the same region, lack of integration detracts from wholeness. The attempt at integration in the Botswana program (MCC and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) is a step in the right direction, but the integration and identification of the various facets of the work are still incomplete.

The future

If the concept of integrating the whole gospel in North American mission efforts overseas should be accepted by the Mennonite constituency in North America and the various mission boards, MCC, and MEDA were serious about implementing the concept, what changes might occur? The question, of course, is academic, and some of the possibilities are highly speculative.

The most radical scenario would be a merger of all mission agencies: mission boards, MCC, and MEDA. The resources of the entire North American Mennonite constituency for witnessing overseas would be merged so that the gospel in its fullness, in its concern for reconciliation with God, redemption from sin with the hope for eternal life, and its concern for human conditions on earth would be exemplified in an integrated program to people worldwide. The resources, human and economic, would demonstrate love and compassion as Jesus exemplified them during his incarnation.

An alternate scenario would see the various denominations continue their overseas efforts with an appreciation for the need of an integrated gospel message. They would be partners with MCC and MEDA, which would supply liaisons to each of the boards and provide help in determining physical needs in the various regions. MCC and MEDA would apply their resources to these situations under the direction of each of the mission boards. MCC and MEDA would lose a degree of autonomy, but their programs would be an integral part of church planting and church extension.

The third approach would require no change in the structure of boards. The various mission boards would accept the mandate of Christ and expand their programs to provide a holistic gospel in their outreach overseas. MCC and MEDA would include evangelism and church planting in their agenda for a witness of compassion to all of the needs of people they serve.

The fourth possibility, the most likely, is that the ideas expressed here will, at best, cause a small flurry of discussion and nothing more. There is, usually, strong resistance to change structures. There are vested interests to consider. There are certain expectations from the constituency. But we need to remember that the structures, the denominational mission boards, and the boards of MCC and MEDA are human structures. They may change; they may even pass away. But the mandate of Jesus to his disciples endures and will endure to the end of this age: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

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How Our Understanding of Mission Has Developed

DELBERT AND FRIEDA SCHELLENBERG ERB

As a special feature during our fifteenth-volume year Mission Focus *has commissioned a series of articles on the theme "How Our Understanding of Mission Has Developed." These articles will be written by various people representing a rich variety of experience.*

Delbert and Frieda Schellenberg Erb currently serve in Argentina with Mennonite Board of Missions. They have served in South America since 1951 and 1965, respectively.

We both entered mission work with similar motives. Our faith in God and our understanding of what Christ did for us had led us to a commitment to Christian service. For one it was nursing and for the other administration. We both believed that mission is not something limited to preachers and seminary students. Christian service cannot be limited to a clerical elite but is for all committed Christians. The priesthood of believers does not divide the work of the kingdom. These convictions took Frieda to a clinic in eastern Bolivia and Delbert to a church office in Argentina.

Beyond the ideal of service we soon learned that mission in a foreign country has obstacles and challenges. A foreigner can truly serve only when relationships with people are established on a level of trust, mutual sharing, and mutual acceptance. Family ties, personal dreams, and American customs must often be put into the background. Identification with a new people and a new culture becomes a challenge and an integral part of mission. We learned to love the Argentines and the Bolivians and little by little came to feel that we were one with them. We believe that identification is a matter of Christian love and understanding. The true church is a people, and to belong is to be committed to a people. Service in the church should never be paternalistic. Service and paternalism are contradictory. Unfortunately, much service is still paternalistic. We have found that identification is not easy without a long-term commitment. This has qualified our understanding of mission and our commitment to mission.

We praise God for having led us step by step. Frieda dreamed of being a missionary nurse, and God took her to a clinic in Bolivia. Although curative medicine gave positive feedback as she learned to know and appreciate Bolivians, she realized this wasn't enough. The Bolivians needed to know how to defend themselves by improving sanitation and nutrition. Local health promoters, educators, and farmers were trained to teach and serve their neighbors. Ways were sought to help Bolivians reach their God-given potential. As Bolivians learned to know the Lord, they realized their personal and community worth. Their relationship with God and the Christian community gave them a new value system and a new purpose in life. Frieda learned that true service encourages and facilitates others to serve.

Delbert went to Argentina as an unordained missionary to work in the office of the Argentine Mission of the Mennonite Church. Soon it became more important to do similar work with the Argentine Conference. In an effort to help both Argentines and foreigners understand ways in which lay people can serve in the church, Delbert became a self-supporting missionary and operated a hatchery. When the church called him to pastoring and teaching, Delbert questioned whether a missionary should do these things. But how can we help others develop their gifts if we are not willing to give our own gifts to the life of the church? Delbert too has seen the importance of helping the Argentines reach their God-given potential. Most important has been Bible teaching on a congregational level so that the gifts of all believers can be used and developed.

As we have committed ourselves to a people and to a church, our goal has been the growth, maturity, and wholeness of that people and church. From this experience we would like to mention two important aspects.

Development. In Bolivia, service in the areas of health, education, agriculture, and Bible teaching became a matter of community development. Each aspect is related to the other and brings wholeness (shalom) to a people. This can be done for the benefit of the community as a whole when there is receptiveness, and in a more special way when it is related to the community of believers. In development, the mission agency does not carry out its program but rather helps the community or church develop its own. God can work in and through a people who seek his will and strive for his shalom.

The employment of gifts. We believe that God gives gifts to all of his children. Within a community of believers this means that the church belongs to everyone and that it remains faithful only when all are faithful in using their gifts. In Argentina the Catholic and Protestant concept of the church has led many to despair because of the lack of, or the unfaithfulness of, clergy, who are expected to do the work of the church. Only as the Holy spirit works to convert people from their lethargy and selfishness can this be changed. When God works to change attitudes and commitments in all of the members of a believers community, that church truly becomes a priesthood of believers. In this a foreigner must accept his or her place and responsibility.

In this day missions are being challenged with a new understanding of what God is doing in our world. We must examine new methods and perhaps revise our goals. We mention three aspects of this challenge.

Bible teaching. With the growth of the church in many countries and the broadening of its leadership, Bible teaching on a congregational level has become very important. We believe that knowledge of the Bible is the best foundation for a faithful church. A theological-training program on a base level must be developed, strengthened, and expanded. Just as *sola scriptura* was the watchword of the sixteenth century, so "base inductive Bible teaching" needs to be the watchword of present-day theological education. This can be at the same time a force for unity and sound doctrine. As a Pentecostal pastor told us recently, "We wouldn't do so many senseless things [in the church] if we studied the Bible more together."

Holistic ministries. The dichotomy of "spiritual" and "physical" must disappear from our way of thinking. Each person is a whole in the sight of God. In mission it is not either spiritual or physical, but both. Our doctrine of salvation, our ethics, and our ideas of service to God must be reexamined. This means that in mission we must see the whole need of people in our world. Evangelism that deals only with metaphysical truths is not what people need. Lives must be changed and liberated. The sins of our culture must be confronted. The church must become the healing community where the shalom of God's kingdom can become reality.

The world Christian community. As never before, the Christian church is now a world community. The greatest challenge before us is to understand what this means in terms of mission. Some have called for a moratorium in missions because of past paternalistic errors. This would only deny that the church is mission. New relationships of mutuality must be discovered and fomented. How to give to each other, receive from each other, teach each other, and admonish one another are all important steps that must be learned. If we believe that the church is the church of Jesus Christ, we must work to bring his mission to all for the glory of God and for the extension of God's kingdom of peace.

In review

***Esperanza en Camino—reflexion Anabautista en America Central* (*Hope on the Way, an Anabaptist reflection in Central America*).** First edition, September 1986, Apartado 340, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, $12.00 U.S., quarterly

Reviewed by Robert J. Suderman

A new sound is coming out of Central America. A new **Spanish** voice is calling amid the news of war, violence, oppression, and repression; amid the voices of interventionists and the intervened; amid the descriptions of poverty and the hopelessness of a rational solution.

I am delighted to see a magazine of this quality and level of profound theological and biblical reflection coming out of this region. G. Flores declares that "the moment for Anabaptism has arrived in Central America." He goes on to set the basis for this *kairos* moment. This moment is related to the need for hope—for a new word. It is a hope based on Jesus, and this Christ is a historical fact.

There is a new urgency for peace as an action related to justice. Flores calls for a united effort of all Anabaptist and Brethren in Christ churches to avoid the historical differences that have separated them and to move toward a unity and a strategy which will allow this new voice to be heard. He outlines a strategy of strong education in the churches and training for pastors and leaders to proclaim, to evangelize, to disciple, and to serve in this area.

In his introductory statement, J. A. Ochoa gives the rationale for a new magazine at this time. He sees the urgent need to proclaim the gospel of peace in the region. The magazine is meant to be a vehicle for the development and the encouragement of contextual and local theology. It is designed to be a study-reflection document for small study groups in order to deepen their theology, based on Anabaptist principles, in a context marred with systemic violence, repression, and armed violence.

The first edition immediately responds to the stated objectives of this new voice. O. Flores provides an analysis of the Central American context. J. Ortiz develops a theology of peace based on the vision of the prophet Isaiah. In good Anabaptist style, L. E. Rodriguez begins by talking about the ethics of the kingdom of God, as taught in the Beatitudes.

G. Schlabach issues a strong call for a prophetic voice within the region, a voice based within a community which is itself prophetic. This implies a community which demonstrates within itself the new social structures called for by the prophets, a new economic system, a new political system, and new nonviolent models of action. This, he says, will also mean supporting individuals who feel called to a prophetic ministry, and it means recognizing, supporting, and celebrating the steps that the society is taking toward greater justice. It also means trusting in the words of the prophets that there is hope because the Lord is compassionate.

Finally, the first edition contains the Declaration of the Anabaptist Consultation, "Challenge 84." This declaration summarizes the new Anabaptist awareness which has taken root in Central America and the strategies articulated by this movement.

O. Flores summarizes well the intention of this new voice: "We understand the mission of the church in the world as the *Presence of God* in the world. Therefore it is the duty of the church to discern the signs of the times, and to interpret these signs in the light of the gospel, in order to respond to the permanent challenges of humanity."

I congratulate the Guatemalan and the Honduran Mennonite churches for uniting their efforts with Mennonite Central Committee to publish this important new voice from Central America. I encourage all to support this venture. The $12 U.S. for the four editions per year will be well worth it for anyone who is able to read the Spanish language.

Robert J. Suderman, currently in Kitchener, Ontario, has served with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church as a teacher in the Baptist Seminary, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

***The Power of the Lamb*.** Edited by John E. Toews and Gordon Nickel. Hillsboro, Kans.; Winnipeg, Man.: Kindred Press, 1986, 184 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Mark Siemens

The Power of the Lamb, like the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15; 2:13-18) that inspired it, will be a blessing to some and a scandal to others, depending upon the reader's openness to Christ's call to peacemaking. The book can be understood as a significant Mennonite Brethren (MB) response to the question, "How can we recover a biblical commitment to peace?"

The authors, all MB pastors and teachers, discuss a variety of topics from the standpoint of peacemaking: Old and New Testaments, the early church, the Reformation and the Anabaptists, MB peace witness in this century, nuclear war and just-war theory, and a final chapter on the hope we have because of the power of the Lamb. All areas are addressed with scholarly integrity but without references, probably because the volume is edited for a high school readership.

An effort to convince evangelical readers that they are to be peacemakers must respond to at least two objections that are often raised: Why should we be peacemakers when our priority is preaching the gospel? And isn't peacemaking really secular humanism?

The first question is addressed in the first chapter, where John E. Toews points out that biblical evangelism necessarily involves peacemaking: we convince non-Christians of their need to follow Jesus in large part by showing Christ's love for them. Loving others, including our enemies, is a natural consequence of our faith in Christ. Peacemaking and evangelism are thus not contradictory but are intimately connected by God's activity through the church to bring all people into good relationship with God and with each other in Christian faith.

The second question is answered by the biblical basis of the entire book which shows that biblical peacemaking has its origin in faith in Christ, just as our actions of compassion toward needy people are motivated by our relationship with Christ. The accusation that biblical peacemaking is secular humanism is addressed explicitly in Henry J. Schmidt's summary of the MB peace witness, where he speaks of the only valid basis for our peacemaking. "Limitless love and nonresistance are the fruit of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That makes the Mennonite Brethren peace witness radically different from humanistic pacifism" (p. 89).

The book's strengths are its thorough biblical grounding and its lucid text. It is organized in 13 chapters, making it possible to use for one quarter's study in a high school or adult Sunday school class. A helpful feature is that each chapter begins with a story that illustrates its message or sharpens the issue. The second appendix, a comprehensive summary of MB statements on war and peace, will be of more interest to pastors and leaders than to the teenage audience.

I have read a number of books that introduce Christian peacemaking. This is one of the best. It deserves to be circulated widely and will undoubtedly be taken seriously by other denominations that are attempting to be faithful to all of the teachings of Christ.

This volume was produced in response to a need for more MB peace teaching. It succeeds in this task superbly. But its task will be

finished only if pastors and high schoolers read it with care and openness to the Spirit's leading.

Mark Siemens is a writer and peace worker in Fresno, California.

Wholistic Christianity: An Appeal for a Dynamic, Balanced Faith. By David O. Moberg. Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1985, 227 pp., $11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Allen R. Guenther

Moberg's thesis is that "much of the disagreement and conflict [within the larger Christian community] flows from a lopsided emphasis upon only portions of the riches that constitute the Christian gospel. A holistic orientation must replace the incomplete and unbalanced versions that characterize so much of contemporary Christendom" (p. xi).

In developing this thesis, Moberg addresses our human and Christian inclination to interpret truth in a piecemeal fashion. Western society, in particular, treats reality by atomizing it and by addressing the smaller, more manageable segments. We are also prone to interpret our world in the light of one particular segment of truth which has been affirmed in personal experience or in moments of national or denominational history.

As a result, Christianity is divided by countless differences in values, beliefs, and practices. Frequently Christians expend more time, creativity, and energy building impenetrable walls out of these disagreements than in identifying and nurturing their common faith and missional task.

Moberg pleads for us to recognize the truth of the different sides of "the diverse dimensions and styles of personal Christian commitment, the competition between personal ministries and those to meet collective needs, the dilemmas of religious institutions, and the challenges related to social change" (p. 153).

One might assume that the call for breadth of vision and understanding is really a disguised liberal Christian plea for tolerance. That is not the case, since Moberg's thesis incorporates the absolutes of Scripture in no uncertain terms. His invitation is to much more than toleration. It calls the church to think large; it challenges Christians to recognize and focus on the essentials; it engages in truly biblical thinking and leads us to question our pigeonhole approach to truth and Christian living.

Wholistic Christianity is loaded with concrete issues. Occasionally these come in such a barrage that they nearly overwhelm the reader. The book is oriented to an American audience, which means the issues are also treated from a distinctly American (sociological) vantage point. The international flavor and longer-range historical perspectives are conspicuous by their absence. The book also contains specific and helpful suggestions as to how we might move toward greater holism.

Moberg's analyses informed and stretched me and led me to a renewed commitment to affirm the larger dimensions of God's truth and work in this world and through the church of Jesus Christ.

Allen R. Guenther is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom. By C. René Padilla. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 199 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John P. Schmidt

In nine essays published for and since Lausanne 74, Padilla argues for a holistic approach to the proclamation of the gospel, warning against cheap grace, materialism, a consumerism in evangelism, and North American "culture Christianity." He sees the American gospel exported to other countries as a combination of truth mixed with culture.

While defensiveness might be a temptation, we need to hear people like Padilla. His views add another hue to the many-colored church God is building worldwide. Not that we advocate uncritical acceptance of all he says, but we must give thoughtful reflection to how our Christianity is viewed from the South American context.

Padilla speaks with authority on subjects such as evangelism and the church, unity in the church, the homogeneous-unit principle, the simple lifestyle, and contextualizing the gospel. His essays are well argued and solidly grounded in Scripture. At points, he could have been more specific in the application of his arguments.

As Anabaptists we can affirm many of Padilla's convictions about mission, particularly the centrality of Christ in a mission theology, the importance of a holistic gospel, and a healthy balance between evangelism and social concern. His plea for radical, costly discipleship can be embraced and affirmed as truly Anabaptist and biblical.

Padilla's work is provocative, but it has some weaknesses. His attempt to include the full range of ethics in evangelism may cause a serious overload to the gospel message. While the gospel includes repentance and submission to the lordship of Christ as something that touches all areas of life, to attempt to include the whole realm of ethics would be to present a message which weighs too heavily on human responsibility. The truth of God's grace and human response in faith must be kept in balance.

Also, the book lacks somewhat in unity, due largely to the fact that it is a collection of essays written over a period of eight years for different conferences. With the subtitle "Essays on the Kingdom," one would have expected that to be the unifying theme. But such is not the case. Only the final essay deals with the kingdom, but it really sheds no new light on this vital subject.

Overall, this volume is an important addition to current missiological thinking, written by a respected evangelical spokesman from the Latin-American context who represents some of the ongoing debate coming out of the Lausanne Congress. In my judgment it does contribute significantly "toward turning the face of evangelicalism in the direction of the suffering world" (Preface, xi).

John P. Schmidt, Clearbrook, British Columbia, is an instructor at Columbia Bible College. He has served as pastor of several Mennonite Brethren churches in British Columbia.

Foolishness to the Greeks. By Lesslie Newbigin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 155 pp., $7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Myron S. Augsburger

This is an extraordinary book on contemporary missiology. Writing from four decades of experience in Christian mission, Dr. Newbigin applies the same discernment involved in contextualizing the gospel in another culture to the issues involved in contextualizing the gospel in our Western culture. He lays bare the pervasive and subtle synergism that alters the gospel and calls us to a thorough critique of our culture and of the way in which we understand or misunderstand the gospel of Christ and his good news of the kingdom of God.

The chapters of this book are basically the Warfield Lectures given at Princeton Seminary in March 1984. They provide a forthright encounter with modern Western culture. Newbigin not only deals with the surface issues of confusing the gospel with the American way but deals with the impact of the enlightenment upon Western thought and how this has often perverted the gospel of reconciliation as centered in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Exposing the absence of a biblical theology in our modern "scientific" thought patterns and a separation of religious values (as a private matter) from "facts" as the claim of scientific reasoning, the author lays bare basic influences that lead people in a modern Western culture to fail to see the relevance of Christ for the total of life. Consequently the relegating of religious values to a private experience and the so-called "facts" of scientific thought as the norm for public life has made Christianity irrelevant to the secular mind-set.

Newbigin's treatment of the authority of Scripture is a stimulant to evangelical thinking, especially as he extends the hermeneutical circle to living process of the larger believing community, the living communities of faith providing us guidance in our understanding of the meanings of Scripture rather than simply applying scientific analysis to literary content that deals with relationships with God and our fellow pilgrims.

The book is important reading for pastors and seminarians for a stimulating perspective on the gospel and Western culture. If we would be missionaries anywhere in the world we should begin in our own culture, discerning the truth of the gospel amid the synergisms that make of Jesus Christ one less than sovereign Lord.

Myron S. Augsburger is pastor of Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship and past moderator of the Mennonite Church General Assembly. He earlier served as president of Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Renaissance and Reformation. By William R. Estep. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 328 pp., $19.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter Klassen

Professor Estep has given us a lively account of important aspects of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Not surprisingly, he has chosen to stress church history, even in the Renaissance. Theological and ecclesiastical developments are given prominence, while political, social, and economic aspects are noted only in passing.

The tone of the volume reflects Estep's strong attachment to the church. On occasion, however, he becomes so strongly didactic that some readers may feel that the churchman has sometimes dominated the historian.

After setting the stage by reviewing religious developments in the late Middle Ages, the author quickly surveys the Renaissance, noting some of its artistic achievements and especially the work of the Christian humanists. With that, Estep moves into what is clearly his chief interest, the early development of various facets of the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation is presented as the story of great personalities, and so we find characters such as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Hubmaier, and Knox at center stage. Theological movements associated with these leaders are appropriately given heavy emphasis. Frequently, the narrative is enlivened by spritely quotations from Reformation sources.

Careful readers will enjoy the human portraits presented here. At the same time, they will be puzzled by the all-too-frequent indications of imprecision. A few examples may be cited: the term "Protestant" is used to describe all non-Catholic Christians (p. 149); *Exsurge domine* is incorrectly listed as the bull of excommunication (p. 128); emperors chosen after 1356 were not all Hapsburgs (p. 100). In addition, several typographical errors mar the text (e.g., Ethelburt on p. 216, Königsburg on p. 259).

More serious, however, is the author's decision to omit important parts of the Reformation story or to give excessive emphasis to some elements. Certainly Hubmaier was important, but does he deserve three times as much space as Loyola, or Cranmer, or Bucer? Similarly, almost no attention is given the Reformation in Scandinavia or Poland, while the German Reformation passes from the scene with the Peace of Augsburg. On the other hand, Estep has included a section too often omitted—an examination of the Reformation in Spain.

Numerous illustrations, useful maps, and a selective bibliography add to the value of this provocative study.

Peter Klassen is professor of history at Fresno (California) State University. He has taught at Fresno Pacific College and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.

The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission, 1977-1984: A Report. Edited by Basil Meeking and John Stott. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 96 pp., $4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Marlin E. Miller

This booklet summarizes the substance of three meetings between evangelical and Roman Catholic representatives in 1977, 1982, and 1984. The Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity appointed the Roman Catholic participants; evangelical representatives were not named by a specified body but were drawn from several churches and organizations (apparently those close to the 1974 "Lausanne Covenant").

A perceived measure of convergence between the understanding of evangelism in the Lausanne Covenant and the papal exhortation on "Evangelism in the Modern World" (1975) prompted the dialogue. The conversations therefore sought to establish points of agreement as well as clarify points of disagreement on seven topics: revelation and authority, the nature of mission, the gospel of salvation, our response in the Holy Spirit to the gospel, the church and the gospel, the gospel and culture, and the possibilities of common witness. In addition, the report includes a worthwhile summary on the role of Mary in salvation.

The report brings few major surprises of theological or practical import. The participants were "agreeably surprised to discover a considerable consensus . . . that repentance and faith, conversion and baptism, regenera-

tion, and incorporation into the Christian community all belong together" (p. 57). Nonetheless, the report also came to the conclusion that "common witness in evangelism would seem premature" (p. 88) because of major doctrinal disagreements as well as significant differences in the understanding of evangelism.

Perhaps the most remarkable and most commendable aspect of these meetings is simply that they have taken place. It is fitting that Christians from different and divided churches come together in order to learn to listen carefully to each other, to grapple with difficult and even divisive questions, to articulate carefully and fairly their agreements and disagreements, to correct misrepresentations, and to explore areas and degrees of common effort.

It is particularly fitting that this happen in relation to Christian mission where divisions among churches frequently constitute an obstacle to evangelization and to the credibility of the gospel. And it is encouraging to note that this group of evangelical and Roman Catholic interlocutors has gone on record expressing its support for several areas of common witness in Bible translation and publishing, in community service, in social thought and action, in dialogue and in worship.

This report merits careful study by missionaries and teachers of mission and evangelism as well as by ministers and students. It could also provide useful service as a resource for other encounters between evangelical and Roman Catholic groups. Because the evangelical participants in this dialogue saw themselves as trustees of the Protestant Reformation, readers of *Mission Focus* would be well advised to supplement and modify some of the "evangelical" as well as "catholic" views by the perspectives of the Radical Reformation.

Marlin E. Miller is Professor of Theology and President of Goshen Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. He earlier served as a Mennonite Central Committee representative in France and Germany.

The Sermon on the Mount: Utopia or Program for Action? By Pinchas Lapide; translated by Arlene Swidler. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 148 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by D. Edmond Hiebert

The author of this scholarly and challenging volume is an Orthodox Jew. He holds a doctorate in Judaic studies from the University of Cologne and has served as visiting professor in three German universities. The book reflects the author's thorough acquaintance with the course of rabbinic interpretation through the centuries. He brings his knowledge to bear upon the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. He frankly admits that he reads the text "as read by Jewish eyes through Hebrew lenses" (p. 11).

Lapide accepts and evaluates Jesus as an accomplished Jewish rabbi who possessed masterly insights into his times and the needs of his people. He recognized the futility of any resort to violence to establish the realm of God and advocated a nonviolent approach based on the "dual commandment of love"—love for God and love for one's neighbor. He insisted on "an ethos of equality, of comradely service and disarming love . . . modeled by the community of disciples amid a brutal world" (p. 104). His nonviolent "theopolitical program" through which God's people will step by step enable the rule of God to take over is set forth in the so-called Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew.

He rightly points out that the Sermon on the Mount is not a sermon but rather Jesus' teaching given directly to his disciples, with the intention that they will carry on his teaching in their own work.

Lapide starts with the Greek text of Matthew and then translates it back into Jesus' mother tongue and interprets it in the light of his thorough knowledge of rabbinic teaching. His reading of the teaching of Jesus in the light of Torah exegesis is challenging and at times yields unique and surprising results. He holds that Jesus did not teach anything new, but his mastery lay in the edifice he built from the materials available. His knowledge of Jewish thought and culture leads Lapide to insist that in some places the Greek redactor of Matthew's original record has distorted the true teaching of Jesus (cf. pp. 67, 77-78, 85-86).

One would expect that as an Orthodox Jew, the author views Jesus as an accomplished Jewish rabbi whose teaching must be understood in the light of its Jewish setting and context. No indication of his messianic identity is given. Jesus' death is mentioned only incidentally and then viewed as a heroic self-sacrifice when his disciples failed him miserably (cf. p. 125). The blame for the crucifixion of Jesus is laid at the feet of Pilate with no mention of the involvement of the Jewish leaders in his death.

This treatment of the Torah background for the teaching of Jesus is confined to Matthew 5, with only fleeting references to chapters 6 and 7. A Scripture index was compiled by James Sullivan (for the English edition?), but no subject index occurs.

The nonviolent, love-promoted program of action which the author shows as fully supported by Torah teaching makes this volume a welcome stimulus for Christian service in our sinful and violent era.

D. Edmond Hiebert is Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies. By Rebecca S. Chopp. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 178 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Jacob Loewen

In this book Rebecca Chopp has distilled rather successfully the ideals and the practice of Latin-American liberation theology (of Gustavo Gutiérrez and José Míguez Bonino) and the ideas of German political theology (of Johann B. Metz and Jürgen Moltmann). Thus this book is an important document for those interested in developing a theology relevant to our day. However, for people working with, or relating to, the church in the so-called third world, this book is a must.

Rebecca Chopp demonstrates unequivocally that the poor and the suffering still make up the bulk of the world God loves and is determined to save. She sees in our Western view of history the reason for the sad condition. We have always been content to view history as the account of the actions of the strong and the victorious and have therefore relegated losers and the victims to the status of nonpersons and hence to irrelevance.

Both liberation theology and political theology challenge this view of reality and of history, especially for the thinking Christian. Both of them want to move Christianity from being the comfortable fortress of the privileged few to becoming the vehicle of salvation for the multitudes of poor, the suffering, and the underprivileged. To achieve this shift, both of these theologies propose a dramatic paradig-

matic shift in theology in which new categories, new questions, and new metaphors force upon us a totally new awareness of God, the Bible, and the church in society.

Here are a few ideas that arrest one's attention:

- The emancipation of a few produced a dehumanization of the many (p. 1).
- Our world suffers from massive institutionalized violence (p. 15).
- Up till now we felt that advances in technology and the increase in knowledge were proof that the human race was on the road to perfection (p. 1).
- The use of the social sciences in theology augurs a new era for theology (p. 86).
- The two-kingdom concept of the Reformation is no longer operative (p. 119).
- Sin involves not only moral behavior; it is also present in social categories (p. 25).
- Base communities make God's people aware (by conscientization) and keep them working together for solutions (participation) (pp. 15, 21).
- Bourgois religion is a mirror-image of evolutionary logic (p. 73).
- For Spanish Christendom, the natural order was God on top, the king next, then the landowner, and finally the serf (p. 9).
- It is not Christ in or against culture; Christ is the model and the vehicle for liberating culture (p. 130ff.).
- Neoorthodoxy and its individualized religion and demythologization made the biblical text formless and useless (pp. 38-39).
- The incarnation was a major step in secularization (pp. 28, 65).
- We need pluralism! "We" must include many worldviews, ethics, religions, and peoples (p. 35).

All told, this is a well-reasoned and thought-provoking book.

Jacob Loewen, Abbottsford, British Columbia, is retired, after serving as a missionary with the Mennonite Brethren Church, professor at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas, and translator and consultant with United Bible Societies.

Salvation and Liberation. By Leonardo and Clodovis Boff. Translated from the Portuguese by Robert R. Barr. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984, 119 pp., $6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Urbane Peachey

The focus of this work is on the spirituality of the poor. The church has always been concerned for the poor, say the authors, but now the strategy for the poor has changed. In times past the church helped the poor through the dominant classes. Now the church goes directly to the poor, "joining them in their struggles, and forming basic communities where faith is vibrant and alive in its social and liberating dimension" (p. 3).

This is compelling, since as the authors indicate, in Latin America nearly all the oppressed are Christian. The task is not simply to conduct formal religion for the poor. Conscience is joined to faith, and ethical and social practice is integral to religion.

The Puebla bishops conference found the cause of oppression and poverty in materialism; materialism is described as a denial of "authentic humanism." The authors call the church to a vocation of love, understood as praxis, in this milieu. Prophetic cries and goodwill, though necessary, are inadequate.

How can love be efficacious? "The key is to know reality better—to understand better the mechanisms that produce poverty, and the avenues that can lead its victims away from it" (p. 5). This is done in three ways.

1. Reality should be analyzed critically through a search for root causes.

2. Biblical interpretation should be related to reality. The Word of God cannot be understood if it is lost in an alien idiom and mentality. This means that people of faith will understand "structural poverty" as "structural sin" and "private accumulation of wealth" as "sin of selfishness."

3. Analysis and vision should be translated into pastoral action. The church has a pastoral duty to act as an agent of liberation—in its preaching, its teaching, its worship, and its community action—all understood as evangelization.

4. The authors observe that the tensions arising in this process tend to reflect our differing sociopolitical experience, rather than differences in our theology. My observation would be that the tendency to defend one's own socio-political system in international church or theological gatherings is a common example.

The Puebla and Medellin conferences introduced liberation officially to the Catholic Church agenda. They speak for "integral liberation"; the salvific work of liberation from sin is integrated with socioeconomic liberation in the same theological initiative. The two are integrated and yet theologically distinguishable. If readers and Bible scholars find this understanding disturbing, it is no more disturbing than the dualism that separates the two.

The writers say they are looking for a better balance between faith and politics. The authors work at this by an imaginary dialogue between a theologian, a Christian activist, and a parish priest. The book is hard reading, but as usual, the Boff brothers are seriously provocative. It is fresh material for churches and missions reviewing their approach in the world.

Urbane Peachey is pastor of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church. He earlier served with Mennonite Central Committee as Secretary for Middle East and as Executive Secretary of Peace Section.

The Politics of Compassion: A Biblical Perspective on World Hunger, the Arms Race, and U.S. Policy in Central America. By Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 132 pp., $8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Werner Kroeker

How reasonable is it to expect the average American evangelical to understand why Christians would leave the constitutional democracy of El Salvador to flee to leftist-socialist Nicaragua, and there in a Bible study to express gratitude for the religious freedom and other benefits they have received from the Sandinista government? Are there similarities in those actions to what Jesus himself did in his ministry?

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer suggests that the reason such information is so startling to us is that we come to both the information we receive and to the Bible with certain fixed ideologies. "Christians in North America, particularly those who are relatively affluent or comfortable, will understand the message of Jesus only if we let the poor be our teachers."

He presents extensive Scriptures to illustrate what he calls its bias to the poor and gives bibilical warning to those who neglect the poor. He calls on Christians to listen to the "logic of the majorities" who are poor in so many of the underdeveloped nations. He writes of the necessity of liberating our theology in order to gain an accurate, contemporary picture.

To dismiss this book as just another liberation theology tract would be a mistake. First, the author's call is to examine the Scriptures and then to interpret reality in light of them. Often liberation theology has reversed that process; he does not. Second, with rapid change taking place, particularly in Central America, where he is highly informed, his many and recent insights are most helpful. Third, he suggests specific changes of attitude and action. These are at least provocative.

Even for those who will not agree with all Nelson-Pallmeyer says, the treatment of the Scriptures and the historical and present illustrations, especially from Central America, will be helpful. For both information and stimulation this book is good reading.

Werner Kroeker is pastor of the Lincoln Glen Mennonite Brethren Church, San Jose, California.

How Long? Prison Reflections from the Philippines. By Karl Gaspar (Foreword by Jim Wallis). Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 171 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Perry Yoder

Karl Gaspar, an active Filipino church worker, was arrested by the military March 26, 1983. He was picked up when he went to pay a farewell visit to a Lutheran pastor who was leaving for Germany and was held for two years because he happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

The reflections in this book come from Karl's time spent as a political prisoner—one among hundreds. He reflects on life in prison, his hopes, dreams, and fears, and above all the life of discipleship to which the Christian is called. Witness his chapter entitled "Discipleship Viewed Through Barbed Wire."

Karl is an eloquent writer who communicates with power—not just because he can express himself well but because of his deep commitment and clarity of vision. Because the book is one of reflection it can fill several purposes. First, it enables one to empathize with the plight of those who are held in prison for conscience' sake.

Second, and more importantly, the view from the prison cell is a penetrating one which helps make clear the essential nature of the gospel. As such these reflections offer valuable and enabling insights into the spiritual dynamics of growth and commitment. Here is a small sense of what the book is about:

In Luke 4:18-19 we see the basis of this spirituality which comes with the anointing of the Spirit. We have to be instruments by which the good news is confirmed in the lives of the poor. We have to let go of all the trimmings of a consumerist and materialistic society and take on a way of life that nurtures true human values. We have to seek the end of all forms of bondage and enslavement so that there are no more captives (p. 153).

While written from a third-world prison, the most valuable service of this book may be to rouse first-world Christians from their spiritual slumbers. In providing kindling for a renewed vision, this book indirectly can be a powerful motivator for missions—the mission of God's kingdom to which Jesus calls us. I hope this book finds its way into the hands and hearts of the readers of *Mission Focus.*

Perry Yoder is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Manual for Today's Missionary: From Recruitment to Retirement. By Marjorie A. Collins. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1986, 390 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Richard Funk

As the title suggests, the content of this book spans from recruitment to retirement. In between are the general topics of field experience and furloughs. In authoring this missionary manual, Marjorie Collins draws from a rich background of missionary service in Pakistan, administrative positions with World Radio Missionary Fellowship (mission radio HCJB) and OCEAN, Inc. (a support program for missionary nurses), and her academic studies at Providence-Barrington Bible College and Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions.

This book provides practical information. Each of its 62 chapters deals with a specific topic such as prayer cards, servants, furlough housing, and using slides and movies in meetings. These chapters have been organized into four larger groupings on preparation, field experience, furlough, and retirement. Since the scope of the book is so broad, it is exactly as the title suggests, a manual for today's missionary.

When covering a broad area of content it is easy to generalize or to omit important segments. This book does not fall prey to oversimplification or generalization. By reading the chapter on medical, dental, and legal matters, one quickly becomes aware of the detail used throughout the book. Under legal matters, Collins discusses a personal will, insurance, entrusting someone with one's complete power of attorney, passports, visa and entrance papers, residence papers, social security, income tax, licenses, health card, bank accounts, and documents such as birth and marriage certificates. This detail makes the book an invaluable resource for the first-term missionary. Then, lest the reader missed an important point, Collins concludes each chapter with a checklist or questions for self-analysis and evaluation.

Besides giving attention to detail, Collins also covers the sometimes neglected topics of the missionary's family (during preparation, service, and furlough) and resignation.

The book is written from a faith-mission perspective, although reference is made to denominational missions. This perspective shines through when discussing topics of financial and prayer support and relationships to North American churches.

As the content leans toward relationships with one's mission board and supporting constituency, it lacks the detail when discussing relationships to nationals or on-location survival. Other unanswered questions are relationships to co-workers and adopting an overseas lifestyle (although a chapter discusses lifestyle while on furlough).

People who are interested in the cause of missions and missionaries will find this book as an invaluable resource manual.

Richard Funk, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is a schoolteacher and moderator of West Portal Mennonite Brethren Church. He is appointed to serve in Austria with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services.

Tell It Often—Tell It Well. By Mark McCloskey. San Bernardino, Calif.: Here's Life Publishers, 1986, 284 pp., $8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Otto Eck

If you like the straight, head-on method of evangelism, then this book speaks your language; but if you feel more comfortable with the friendship and lifestyle approach, then this book will give you much with which to react and interact.

Mark McCloskey has written a well-documented book on the issue of one-to-one evangelism. Throughout the 20 chapters he uses examples from his personal life as well as from history. But even more, the casual reader will notice the strong case the author tries to make from Scripture.

McCloskey takes a methodological and systematic approach in developing his case of the great need for one person to share the good news of God's salvific plan with another.

The first four chapters are dedicated to establishing a biblical foundation of the great need to take evangelism seriously. McCloskey uses the Pauline model out of Acts. Most of his scriptural references are concentrated around the book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Some references are taken out of the Gospels, and the Old Testament is mostly neglected.

Chapters 5-12 deal with the sociological environment of humanity, such as secularism, nominalism, the "misdirected religious person," and the need for a conversion experience for each individual.

McCloskey writes with great conviction that every Christian should have a pragmatic method and strategy for sharing the gospel. When sharing with another person, the Christian should immediately, after establishing initial contact, share the gospel in its entirety and call for a decision. This is where the author runs into conflict with the relational evangelism model. Chapters 13-19 are dedicated to prove the shortcomings of friendship evangelism as deliniated by Joe Aldrich in *Life-style Evangelism.* McCloskey argues against most "shortcomings" of Aldrich's method.

The last chapter emphasizes the development of a strategy for the mobilization of every member of the church. Here the author admits with Aldrich that many types of "harvest vehicles," including the relational model, should be implemented.

McCloskey, the reader will notice quickly, comes strongly from the Campus Crusade for Christ school of thought. His approach will be considered controversial in some circles, yet the need for urgency of the gospel is at the center of his book.

Otto Eck is a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Spirit Aflame: Luis Palau's Mission to London. By Susan Holton and David L. Jones. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, 226 pp., $7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Arthur M. Climenhaga

Spirit Aflame is a record in fairly chronological sequence of the preparation for, regional developments preceding, and final consummation of the evangelism crusade featuring evangelist Luis Palau in Queens Park Rangers football stadium in June and July 1984.

The authors have pictured in detail the urgent contemporary need for revival flames in Great Britain. They present in considerable detail the various ways in which a vision for evangelism was cultivated by prayer, regional invitations, access to the media, and development of area and special missions. In a sense this was considered to be phase one of the crusade. The finale was phase two in the Queens Park Rangers rallies and included significant broadcasts to the British Commonwealth. The assessment of the results pictures transformed lives and growing churches.

In a day of renewed concern for evangelism and witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ on the part of Mennonites and all the Anabaptist community (especially as it was seen in ALIVE '85), this book is helpful collateral material to see how God is working in areas corollary to our own communities and fellowships.

The book is not without its flaws. One senses repetitiveness in storytelling. A more systematic overview of the beginnings, development, and consummation of the crusade would have been helpful. One has to keep a sense of sequence in mind in reading through story after story.

However, among the strengths are the two sermons by Luis Palau. The explanation of the complementary aspects of the crusades by Luis Palau in London and Billy Graham in the larger outreaches of Great Britain at practically the same time is helpful. For these reasons I recommend the book to pastors, church leaders, and all involved in any kind of church ministries as a vital addition to personal and church libraries telling the story of contemporary evangelism in this day.

Arthur M. Climenhaga, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, is a representative on the Brethren in Christ Board of World Missions and a professor of missions at Ashland Theological Seminary.

Communication Theory for Christian Witness. By Charles H. Kraft. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983, 255 pp., $11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Leslie Mark

Charles Kraft's book, *Communication for Christian Witness,* is an "at last" book. At last we have a work that is understandable and which motivates one to try theory in practice. Once begun, it is not likely to find itself on the shelf until finished.

This book is well documented with a well-balanced bibliography. Kraft has done his homework. This makes his work timely and not simply an insipid rehash of sterility. It is good.

The book is well outlined and would be an excellent text for both teachers and students. It treats intangible subjects with realism and avoids being sickeningly religious or otherworldly. It is down-to-earth, sensible, easily understood, and shows what is waiting to be done.

Kraft has dared to take on the giant of American Christianity by showing kindly and firmly that it needs to change, where it needs to change, and why. The author deserves a high grade on this economically reachable book.

Leslie Mark teaches at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. He earlier served in Mexico and India.

Editorial

An important event for all those associated with the Christian mission is the recent publication of the 13th edition of the *Mission Handbook* (MARC, 1986). Although it is copyrighted in 1986, it was not actually available until 1987. Its data are current as of 1985.

The bulk of this 627-page book is taken up with a listing of United States and Canadian agencies working overseas. The entries are based on information compiled from a questionnaire completed by these agencies. A comprehensive definition of "mission" was used in determining what agencies to include. Here one will find listed Christian development agencies along with those dedicated strictly to evangelism. Traditional mission agencies are listed along with groups which provide specialized services to missions or missionaries. Both denominational and parachurch agencies are included. A total of 764 agencies are listed, compared to 714 in the 12th edition of 1979.

This handbook contains a number of special features. The volume is introduced by two substantial interpretive essays. The first piece, prepared by the Research and Information staff of World Vision International, gives an overview of "Christianity in the World." This is a handy and authoritative review of the current status of Christianity, first globally and then by continent. This survey underscores how uneven the size and quality of the Christian community is throughout the world. Clearly the areas of the most vigorous growth are in the non-Western world. The spiritual element in European culture seems anemic while the North American scene is a combination of vigor and lethargy.

The second article is by Robert T. Coote, who writes about "Taking Aim on 2000 A.D." Coote reviews some of the mission goals being set by various North American churches and agencies. He places these current goals statements in the historical context of the period 1888-1985, from the emergence of Arthur T. Pierson's watchword, "The evangelization of the world in this generation," to the present search for a new slogan which will galvanize the next generation. Coote counsels that greater care be exercised in setting goals lest we give way to overinflated rhetoric and lose credibility.

Furthermore, Coote debunks some of the myths which have gained currency. For example, he exposes the assumption common within the North American evangelical community that they constitute the "most missionary-minded church" in the world. Coote simply says that the statistics do not support such a conclusion. Another misperception is that the United States is the leading country in the number of missionaries sent abroad. Fourteen European countries plus Canada all outranked the USA in the number of missionaries per capita. Coote makes a disturbing but telling correlation: the USA ranks 16th in the number of missionaries per capita, approximately the same rank the nation holds with regard to international aid programs. The spirit of isolation and retreat inward is a reality with which we must reckon.

Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* and Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* describe aspects of American culture which are present in the churches, not just in society at large.

Implicit in Coote's essay is the question whether our penchant for "hard" data is not getting in the way of dealing with a more fundamental question, namely, attitudes and values which govern choices and determine our dedication.

The value of the *Handbook* is enhanced by several indices and an analysis of the survey. Several facts from the survey will give a sample of the wealth of information found here. Agencies participating in the survey reported for 1985 a total of 67,242 North American workers overseas, an increase of nearly 15,000 since 1979. This includes career workers and short-termers. While career workers increased by 2,500 to a total of 38,037, short-termers went from 16,969 in 1979 to 27,933 in 1985. The total number of agencies listed increased by 50, but this included a reduction of 16 through mergers. Thus 66 new agencies had to be formed to account for the net increase. The number of agencies with more than 1,000 workers increased from 4 to 6 while the number of agencies with 1 to 99 workers decreased from 351 to 339, thus confirming an earlier prediction that smaller agencies would face tougher times in the future.

The *Mission Handbook* has become an indispensable tool. Time spent studying its almost bewildering array of information will be rewarded. It provides the names, addresses, and telephone numbers one expects of a directory; but it also defines the scope and shape of the Protestant missionary enterprise sponsored from North America.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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An Anabaptist Witness Amid Aboriginal Peoples of North America

MENNO WIEBE

The post-Easter walk of Jesus and the Emmaus disciples began with a conversation on the road. Notably, Jesus joined the disciples on the theme of their own discussion. As they talked about the resurrection event and especially as they shared food, the discovery came that Jesus was in their midst. Their eyes were opened. Their hearts were on fire.

This is an account of what we have learned from our work and witness among native peoples in North America. The learnings have been manifold, many of them still in process. The learnings are also selective, since my own experience is selective and partial at best. Hence my presentation will invite alternative or additional findings by others. Especially those of my colleagues who are involved in similar work are invited to correct and complete the information and interpretation I seek to present.

But as the disciples of Emmaus were enlivened by discussions of their mutual faith, so our faith can be nourished as we speak with one another about that which we have seen and heard and done.

A Case for a Christian ministry with native people of North America

A Christian ministry among native people of North America is not uppermost on the agenda of sponsoring Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. Were we to compare the impetus, financial contributions, and preparation of personnel for work among native people, we would conclude quickly that this ministry receives marginal attention. Nevertheless there are some compelling reasons for people of Anabaptist heritage to give serious attention to sharing the good news with the original peoples of this continent.

The native people or native Americans, as they are called in the United States, are our neighbors. We are here, most of us, by virtue of immigration by our ancestors. The native people live next to us. Together we are co-citizens, lopsided as the status of that co-citizenship is. We share a continent, its lands and its resources, unfair as that sharing may be. In the national sense we are members of the same society even with the growing disparity.

Menno Wiebe is director of Native Concerns, Mennonite Central Committee Canada. He presented this piece at the meeting of Voluntary Service Directors of North America and the Inter-Mennonite Home Ministries Council at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 30-May 1, 1987.

The native people are our neighboring communities. There is an amazing correlation in Canada, for instance, of proximity between Indian and Mennonite settlements. This proximity results in an intersection of the peoples on many levels. They intersect in professions, in businesses, in schools, in hospitals, and in our neighborhoods. Some even rent our revenue homes. The proximity of Mennonite and Indian communities is especially intense in such areas as the Fraser Valley, Coaldale, Alberta, Calgary, Edmonton, North Battleford, Rosthern, Winnipeg, Altona, and Thompson. Such proximities are intensified in the Mennonite/Indian relationships in Central America, and especially in the Paraguayan Chaco.

The "Who is my neighbor?" question as posited by the lawyer to Jesus would surely have a parallel story that could be told for us. We meet the Indian people on our way. Often we get caught like the priest and the Levite, looking the other way without responding with compassion as true neighbors should.

A second reason for a ministry with native people lies in the pervasive cultural misunderstanding of Indian people. Unlike the rest of the population segments who are committed to an integrative or an assimilative approach to life, the native people reject that integration. This rejection meets with widespread misunderstanding, even resentment. While immigrant groups have come to the North American cultural mix by choice and are predisposed to the integrative process, the original people of this continent had no choice in the matter. Neither does their distinct culture easily permit a melting into the main stream. If their choice is between getting lost in the main stream or being socially marginalized, it appears that the native people would choose the latter, and thus be at odds with the majority population. For them, culture is not an optional frill of life but belongs to the center and purpose of their existence. That purpose they are not willing to relinquish.

A third reason for engaging in a native ministry is the fact that some Mennonite people are Indian. We have the Cree Mennonite Fellowship of Cross Lake, the Ojibway Mennonite Fellowship of Paungassi, an informal fellowship at Bloodvein River and Hole River, and eleven Mennonite congregations in the Red Lake, Ontario, area arising out of the Northern Light Gospel Mission. A number of Indian Christians have become our full-fledged brothers and sisters in the church. A number of these are members on church-related boards of the Brethren in Christ and Mennonite conferences. People of native background are included in Mennonite families by marriage and adoption of children. These associations alone warrant an ongo-

ing native-based ministry.

We have an ongoing need to test our expressions and patterns of faith. Indian people find ways of reminding us that our own theology is culture bound and is not particularly fruitful if imported from Europe or if borrowed from the early American pioneers who, after all, displaced the Indian people. We need a theology that is born and bred and codiscovered with the Indian people on this North American turf. To rediscover aspects of faith through the eyes of native people can and will greatly contribute to a more authentic theological expression. To recognize that God has not been without a witness to the original people of North America seems like a fruitful beginning point in the declaration of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. Ignoring and sometimes denying Indian histories and denouncing their way of life have at times been the message of Christian evangelists. While that message was decisive and assertive, its long-range effect has been serious deterioration.

Regaining gospel wholeness is a further reason for a native ministry. Evangelism and mission activities undertaken by North American churches are coming under increasing scrutiny from so-called third-world countries. That scrutiny is directed at our theology which does not sufficiently address North America's way of handling its own third world, namely our dealings with our own oppressed people whose culture is under relentless pressure to fade out of existence. The resulting poverty, fierce social degradation, growing violence, excessive alcoholism, crime, and apathy are recognized widely as a seedbed for potential retaliation.

We have much to learn from native people about evangelism and Christian service:

- Nonaggressive styles of evangelism.
- The wholism of life that does not separate the spiritual from the rest of life.
- The inter-connectedness of all creatures as portrayed in most Indian worldviews.
- Recognition of the proximity of spirit and matter.
- The ecological custodianship of all of God's creation presented as a theological concern.

A further reason for an Anabaptist presence in native-American communities lies in the entrée to the native people. Despite considerable disparity between native and nonnative people and despite considerable rejection of Christianity, there appears to be an openness to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ involvement which can likely be attributed to several factors:

- The word/deed combination, particularly as it is manifest in the Voluntary Service assignments in native communities, addresses down-to-earth needs with visible help. Alleviation of suffering by nurses and doctors, instruction of native children by VS teachers, addressing real poverties and conflicts by social workers, together with their Christian testimony presents an opportunity for unusual anchorage into a local community.
- The servanthood stance of Anabaptist workers plays down the status orientation of professionalism, seeks co-residency with the people, and as a whole discourages abuse of power in the community. This servanthood stance arising out of Anabaptist thinking permits a horizontal rather than a vertical relationship which fits well into the near egalitarian structure of most Indian cultures.
- Anabaptists share a history of social ostracism, minority status, suffering, poverty, landlessness. This common history furnishes a great forum for mutual understanding.
- The rediscovery of the ethnos seems to be an attractive ingredient on the part of both the native-American and Anabaptist peoples. Both knew and partially know themselves as a people. Both recognize the basic human need for peoplehood. The potential of discovering the church as an expression not only as a collection of individual Christians but as a corporate body seems in line with the growing emergence of self-determination, even self-government among native peoples.

An additional reason for native ministry involvement, especially on a coordinated level, lies in the need to bring together existing missions now working among native peoples. We need to cultivate relations among colleagues who share a vision of an Anabaptist approach. Additional interest has been expressed by church groups not yet formally involved in native ministry. Church conferences, Mennonite Central Committee, and other Mennonite-related mission groups should convene to avoid further religious fragmentation of the native communities.

Working with native people of North America would greatly help to validate mission and evangelism work elsewhere in the country. To make mission a reality, it should be made so locally.

Vocational intersections between Mennonites and native people are extensive. That intersection happens in classrooms, hospital wards, law courts, business establishments, employ-

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ment centers, and in housing arrangements. These are ready-made contexts for potential fruitful Christian witness.

A growing trend in evangelism is to put energies in the areas where success is most likely. Emphasis is on quantifiable results. The target audience is often the middle or upper class of the urban and suburban areas and for those who are racially and culturally integrationist in their orientation. This trend deserves our critique since success measured by pragmatic and quantifiable criteria does not in itself represent a biblical basis for deciding on the method or the locus of our witness. Since the cultural distance between the Indian people and European whites is substantially greater than the distances among immigrant groups or nationalities, this evangelism trend deserves extra testing. The predisposition of immigrant cultural groups to assimilate into the cultural mainstream of prevailing Canadian and U.S. society should not yet be grounds for evangelism. A greater similarity exists in the work ethic, the social organization, the vocation, and the ecological views among all branches of immigrant groups. Yet this cultural proximity may at best be a questionable reason for selecting immigrant groups as preferred audiences for evangelism.

Identification with other immigrant groups adds to the argument of native people that the church is aligned with the power-holding, the dominant, and the exploitative segment of North American society. Since native people are almost always the victims of such exploitation, the credibility of the church has been at stake.

A final reason for a native ministry reaches all the way back to the birth of the Anabaptists. In the embryonic stages of Anabaptism in 1526 when preachers Felix Manz and Conrad Grebel were awaiting trial in the city of Zurich for their position on the baptism of adults, the two young men carried on a conversation at the outskirts of the city and were overheard by a guard to deliberate approximately as follows:

Grebel: "Felix, why did we get into this difficult situation? Perhaps I should have stayed in my father's ironworks business and saved myself all this hassle."

Manz: "Or I might have followed my father's vocation as a tailor."

Grebel: "Or perhaps we could leave this conflict and go to America where we could preach the gospel to the red man."

The declaring of ourselves

Perhaps critique for our work should not be whether we are evangelicals with a set of unique qualities but whether we present ourselves and are loyal to an Anabaptist understanding of the Scriptures. Some of us are eager to shed the ethnic stigma of being Mennonite. Some find ethnic adherence a deterrent for evangelism. Yet the experience of the Mennonite witness in the native communities is that our very declaration of who we are is a necessary prerequisite for an honest exchange between peoples of two different cultures. As we declare fully who we are ethnically and theologically we have opportunity to relate to those whose cultural identity is already known and well established. My good Cree friend once told me, "If you expect me to open my door, you better open yours as well." Such is honest two-way communication. Since native people by and large are not integrated in their cultural approach but rather regenerate their own cultural identity, they seem to respect others who assert their own cultural heritage as well.

The concept of the church among Anabaptists is that of a visible body of brothers and sisters. The church corporately represents the birth and rebirth of peoplehood. If we will deny our own peoplehood, that is, the biblical calling to be not only individual Christians but a corporate ethnos, then surely new pockets of people will find rebirth on the borders of our institutions. That regrouping is already evident in the form of house churches, intentional communities, and VS units. Somehow, the early declaration of God, that it is not good for humans to be alone, suggests that humanity at its intended best finds fulfillment in peoplehood community.

God has led Anabaptists not through history of others but through our own history. God does not intend for us to surrender a theology brewed out of a tough and daring stance in favor of theologies which have not come through the journey of suffering, death, social rejection, seeking refuge, and finding new countries in which to live out faith. Again and again our people have rejected surrender to the world around us, and have sought instead a national and vocational context in which to be a community of faith. That community was to demonstrate an alternative to the world, a modeling of Christ's kingdom.

In an era with fewer and fewer social identity markers, such as unique attire, common geography, distinct language or dialect, and common vocation, it seems especially necessary that we discern the basic ingredient of our peoplehood. We no longer can coast on the externals to create an automatic community. Perhaps in this era in which Anabaptists are socially, vocationally, geographically, and linguistically indistinct from the world around us, the declaration of who we are theologically is particularly important. May our identity be founded on our faith in Jesus, the Savior of the world, the founder of the church, the Prince of Peace, and the builder and rebuilder of God's people, the church. Such a community of discernment, care, redemption, service, and peace must take its cues from Christ himself.

To find again our new commitment to the ethnos, the peoplehood of which Peter speaks (1 Pet. 2:9-10), is not only to be theologically obedient but also to be sociologically realistic since those individuals without adherence to a people are of all human beings the most miserable, the most incomplete. It is in our trust in the church that we will also find a meaningful identity within prevailing nationalisms. Then we will be able to present a Christ who is not tied to Star-Spangled loyalty or identified with the Maple Leaf. As we make our commitment to a non-tribal, nonnational Christ, then our presentation of him will find fresh, fertile meaning among people of other cultures. Hence our self-concept as a people is basic to our mission message.

Although my work is almost exclusively within the large spectrum of native culture and is exercised in an interchurch forum, I have not yet found that a firm, unapologetic identification with the Anabaptist people is in any way a deterrent for the work. Instead, the open, honest declaration of who we are almost always create a unique and usually fruitful entrée to people of another denomination or of another culture. Like the disciples of Emmaus, our pilgrimage through history is not only a walk with Jesus but also a walk with one another.

People-to-people witness

The continuing witness left behind by Jesus took on corporate shape. The ongoing manifestation of Jesus comes via the collective body of people called the church. As an ongoing body of Christ, the church carries with it the spiritual message of salvation, justice, hope, and peace. It also embodies the deep human need to be gregarious. The church is a community of people, not just an aggregation of individuals. If faithful, this corpus presents in each generation and in each social nexus a modeling of God's kingdom, that which society should really be.

Christians should understand the biblically based genius of peoplehood. God knew the Hebrews as a people with whom God could covenant: "I will be your God and you shall be my people." Such is the recurring covenant theme of the prophets. Often wanting to coast on their genetic heritage, the Hebrews were repeatedly reminded that membership was not automatic but came via obedience.

As Jesus regrouped the church he reemphasized that membership in the kingdom was through rebirth, belief, repentance, and obedience. The will of God continues to be best expressed through the faithful church. Twentieth-century Christians in the Western world are greatly pressured by their cultures to individualize and privatize this faith. Especially those most attuned to their culture, namely the highly visible evangelists, appear to advocate faith apart from a peoplehood participation. The resulting absence of a forum for exhortation leaves them vulnerable and often unaccountable. The strictly one-way communication of the so-called electronic church exaggerates the already undue individualism and the absence of input from a church community. In so many ways, electronic preaching is the antithesis of wholesome communication. Broadcasting, at its best, can and should in the end create loyalty not to the broadcasters but to local church communities.

Individualism as one strong trend of Western culture is part of the prevailing cultural ethos wherein we seek to promote an Anabaptist faith. The people of God is a strong biblical motif. Since it has unusual prominence in the origin and subsequent historic experience of Anabaptists we have reason to take a long look at "how got we here," and then exercise our own peoplehood experience and extend it to a progressive, strong but lonely world of Westerners. Anabaptists are in a good position to proclaim the good news of Jesus, the people builder.

The people-to-people witness is contrasted with a delegated type of missionary emphasis. People-to-people communication is especially relevant as Mennonites extend their witness to the native people of Canada. Such a stance furnishes yet unrealized opportunities of lay witness. Because of geographic coexistence of co-citizenship our witness is not restricted to those selected by mission boards or Christian service organizations to take on specific assignments among native peoples. The acquaintance wants to spill beyond individual relationships. Native people get to know the families, friends, and churches of those who are sent. To a degree, the church as a whole is sent. Mennonite Central Committee, for instance, is widely known in northern Canada as a corporate ethnic body. Assigned persons through mission and service organizations are seen not only as individuals but as a part of a people.

The strain to be reborn as a people is observed among native preachers. Unlike immigrant groups who seek to shed their cultural uniqueness and their accents, the native people are on the search to regain and sustain their identity. That social reality is theologically instructive, especially for Anabaptists who are increasingly going with the social flow of the dominant culture.

Anabaptists who have known themselves as a people theologically and socially for 460 years could discover their own peoplehood a unique biblically valid "anknüpfungspunkt" with the native peoples of the Americas. For the dry bones of Ezekiel's death valley await reassembling into a body infused with the live breath of God himself so that those wishing to be a people of God again can be so in a beautiful corporate way. Biblical faith genuinely shared generates not only faith but results in the embryos of new peoplehoods. Looking back, the new faith adherents can cite with ownership the 1 Peter text: "Once you were no people but now you are God's people."

What are we learning?

To take a listening stance is hazardous for sponsoring mission and service bodies. The results of what we hear may not fit into preexisting mission policies or goals. Encouraged by the board of MCC Canada to take a listening stance among native people, we have tried to hear, see, and feel what they are saying to us and to other churches. Here are some of the findings:

Broadening God's target of love. Adam Cuthand, Anglican priest of the Cree Indian people, began an exegesis of John 3:16 by reading it with Greek New Testament in hand. His insistence that God so loved the cosmos helped us understand that God's love for the world included not only human souls but the entire environment. Cuthand's rereading of the Greek term *cosmos* encompasses a wider understanding of the world, and his Cree version of God's relationship to the earth made it possible for him to broaden our own understanding of that familiar text. Hence, humans should respect their co-creation rather than only regard other aspects of creation as potential for mercenary exploitation. Ecological considerations are central theological considerations and not some trendy pseudoscientific fad. To preach the favorite John 3:16 text then without regard to this broader meaning is to present a partial and biased gospel. To restrict preaching to a spiritual domain also questions the credibility of the faith since it wrongly exempts Christians from addressing the ugly sins of widespread abuse against the environment, of land grabbing, of displacing Indian people. By implication the harsh political and social treatment of Indian people receives biblical endorsement. The failure of Christian missionaries to address the ecological and social sins have undermined the credibility of the Christian faith among native people.

Relearning corporateness. In 1959 Chief Alfred Cook of Bloodvein River invited the Mennonites to begin a mission in his Ojibway community. He asked the Mennonite Pioneer Mission to come to his reserve to open up a chapel and a school since his people had decided they wished to become Mennonites. The response from the mission secretary, however, was disappointing to Chief Cook. The secretary maintained that to become Mennonites, each person would need to make that decision individually, then be baptized upon confession of their faith and become members of the church. The mission did get started at Bloodvein River, but the corporate decision of this elder chief was overruled, an overruling that has been regretted by the mission board ever since.

Corporateness seems stronger than individualism among the Cheyenne people as well. An examination of *The Cheyenne Spiritual Songs* is instructive on this point. Much of the reference to the faith is cast in first person plural, "we" rather than "I" and "me," which is so typical of American gospel songs. The emphasis is on a people, an emphasis likely not learned from the mission context, but one which has deep roots in their own philosophy and correlates well with the Old and New Testament.

Room for the Spirit and the dream. Jeremiah Ross, Cree hunter of Cross Lake, Manitoba, invited missionary Ernie Sawatsky to join him on his trapline. They would be away five weeks. Ernie left the Sunday school in charge of some local women and joined Jeremiah and several other hunter colleagues. During the evening, they sat around the fire in their small log shacks, telling Cree legends and recounting the day's experiences. One day close to the end of the trapline journey, Jeremiah confided his dream to Ernie. It went like this:

> *A long time ago, maybe 25 years, my wife and I were out hunting. For four days we did not catch anything. We were very hungry and weak. That evening when we lay down to*

sleep we felt sick. Then I had a dream. I dreamed that there was a very tall ladder going straight up. I climbed that ladder and when I reached the top there the Great Katabindiget met me. He said, "Jeremiah, go down and be a minister among your people." So I climbed down the ladder and just when I reached the bottom I woke up. Then my wife also woke up and she saw a moose swimming across the lake. I took my 303 and shot the moose. We skinned it and ate the meat and were strong again. That is my dream.

Ernie responded, "Jeremiah, you had this dream 25 years ago and the Great Katabindiget—that is, God—instructed you to be a minister to your people. Then why are you not a minister?"

Jeremiah answered, "I was afraid to tell anyone about it. You are the first one I have told this dream."

"Would you tell this dream to the others when we get back to Cross Lake?" Ernie asked. When they returned to Cross Lake, Jeremiah shared it first with the men of his kindred. Then he shared it in church. After telling the story in church, one of the senior ladies asked Jeremiah why he was not a minister. The rest of the church members approved the question.

Thus Jeremiah Ross was called to be a minister among his people. Fortunately the mission board accepted this dream and this form of his calling. To this day Jeremiah Ross remains an excellent biblical preacher with great rapport in the Cree community. The Mennonite mission board waived the usual college and seminary training as prerequisites for Jeremiah's call to the ministry. In his Cree community, leadership in the church became accessible through the Cree means of leadership selection. Cree peoplehood was acknowledged and cultivated rather than regarded as a barrier to the transmission.

Learnings About Peace. *Manno*, an Ojibway concept, has some striking qualities of reconciliation about it. Two people caught in a conflict do not carry on their contentions forever. Instead the stronger of the two, or perhaps the more respected, will come forward and utter the word *manno* which means something like "let it be." It is a recognition that not all conflicts could or should be managed. There is a point in which the Anabaptist concept of *Gelassenheit* comes to mind. *Manno* was generated by Ojibway peoplehood, and where that peoplehood is acknowedged, reconciliation has a chance of being developed.

Learning about capital punishment. We were shocked to hear of the stabbing death of Edna Fisher-Young of Bloodvein River. Edna, age 30, mother of seven children, and wife of my good friend Wilfred, was stabbed to death by Agnes Kennedy, a 17-year-old youth from the other end of the reserve on March 26, 1981.

I followed the request of Wilfred to come to Bloodvein to participate in the funeral. So did my colleague, Abe Hoeppner. Both of us participated in the wakes preceding the formal funeral. We visited members of both families. This death had the potential of sparking considerable tension between the two opposing clans represented by Edna and Agnes. Agnes was in custody on charges of murder.

Then came the day of the funeral. The service took place in the small Mennonite chapel. Following the formal presentations and the singing I called for words from members of the congregation. A number of individuals rose to speak, offer readings from the Scriptures, songs, and prayers. Toward the end, the senior mother Isabella Young, grandmother of Agnes, rose to speak. She uttered words of regret and deep sorrow. She expressed the wish that no grudge would be held against her family. She also expressed hope that all the children could be taught to live the right way, a way of peace and Christian love. Following Isabella's speech the other grandmother rose. She was Bella Cook, relative of Edna's. After citing some Scripture she uttered words of gentleness, saying that neither she nor her family held any hostile feelings toward Agnes and her family. Despite the horror of the death, she expressed hope in the Christian way. With that commendable exchange of forgiveness and dissolution of any vengeance the funeral ended, and the body of Edna Young was peacefully laid to rest.

According to our observation there have been no incidences of vendetta over the death of Edna. There was no call of capital punishment. Instead the Christian community, some Catholic, some Pentecostal, and some Mennonite, dissolved the potential flames of a feud. Within the corporateness of the Ojibway such deep values of forgiveness are couched. The church became the peoplehood forum for genuine forgiveness of the grossest of human transgression. Indeed it was an example of Christ's forgiving love even in the face of the violent and painful death of a loved one.

About the use of uranium. Georges Erasmus, then president of the Dene Nation and now Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, reminded a group of church people at one time that the Dene are deeply aware of the use of uranium mined by their fathers and grandfathers during World War II. Erasmus reminded us that they have deep feelings about the use of this highly potent mineral for purposes of destroying their own distant relatives in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (an example of extending Dene peoplehood to the international scene). But the problem was, Erasmus asserted, that their people were left without an option for making their living, instead of ultimately serving the interests of others.

Being cheated on the peace agenda. Elmer and Nadina Myron, a young Hopi couple who were giving pastoral leadership to the Bacavi Mennonite Church, discovered that Mennonites were like the Hopi, a people of peace. They wondered why this had never been told them by Mennonite missionaries. Peace, they asserted, is not an addendum to the gospel or an optional or peripheral ingredient but central to the faith. The Myrons did some serious exhortation to the Mennonite mission board for rendering an abbreviated version of the gospel. Mennonite missionaries were admonished for leaving a part of their biblical insights out of the evangelism agenda.

Local accountability. Widespread and prominent is the imposition of external authority upon the native communities. In areas of education, health, economics, welfare, politics, and evangelism the lines of authority seem to flow from headquarters, not from the local people. But when listening carefully it appears that the chain of command is respected only for reasons of acquiescence. Within the people themselves rests a latent and sometimes active authority. Especially in Voluntary Service have we exercised a stance we have called local accountability. Authority, when it is vested in VS workers, is turned back to the community. To regard the community as a decision-making body seems logical, natural, and right. Yet that is happening only rarely, and it is most refreshing when it does. To treat a community as a community with decision-making powers is a much-welcomed stance. This stance has won entrée again and again for Voluntary Service people. In an era where self-determination, self-government, and aboriginal rights are increasingly asserted, it is especially necessary that the church which believes in peoplehood and believes in the community as a discerning body respect the native people for that present and potential rebirth not only as individuals but as a people.

Faith through native eyes and ears. Much has been said and conjectured about Indian spirituality. Much has been feared

about this renaissance. Easily it has been condemned as demonic and anti-Christian. But Indian spirituality has also been greatly misunderstood. Perhaps it could be understood better if Indian spirituality were to be contrasted with white spirituality rather than with the Christian faith. To see Christ through native eyes, to read the Scriptures, understand the world around them, and envision their own hope through their own cultural lenses promises a new, authentic rebirth indigenous to their own people.

For too long biblical truths have been portrayed as European truths. Too often the understanding of the Scripture was seen through Anglo-Saxon or Germanic eyes, but unknowingly so, as preachers were sent to the native communities.

One of the greatest rewards in the mission witness is a truth codiscovered with the native people. To read the Scriptures **with** the people allows for biblical insights to be codiscovered rather than prescribed. Again, it takes a stance of servanthood, of being a fellow believer rather than a master in codiscovering this truth cross-culturally.

For the Emmaus disciples the conversation was more in the form of questions and of a mutual search than one prescribing for the other. Then the eyes were opened by both parties, and the hearts of all were warmed. The fellowship was born.

Preparing the servants

What shall our conversation be on the road as we journey together with our coservants entering VS assignments among native peoples? At regular orientations, MCC has a special section usually called "Crossing the Cultural Thresholds." What we share with volunteers are learnings about current and ever potential native peoplehood. We suggest:

- If the dream isn't theirs it is not worth pursuing. What you do must have native validation before it will take native rootage.
- Work toward development of local decision-making bodies and generate local accountability. Deflect the authority accorded you to the local people. Let your invited presence contribute to the rediscovery of local authorities.
- Don't coast on your status or profession gained elsewhere. Your entrée must be re-earned, especially in cross-cultural settings.
- Know the people. Know the history and culture. Work at the language. Know the current social makeup, especially the kinship connections.
- Listen to the elders. There are also local political leaders who unfortunately are forced to be oriented mainly to the outside. Do not get into contests with them. Consult the local elders. There is untapped wisdom available. Seek it.
- Learn their legends. Legends, poetry, and music are the cultural windows to native life, containing much more than factual information. The legends penetrate beyond the surface acquaintance to the knowledge of their inner makeup, their worldview, and their deepest values. They also contain some interesting humor.
- Purify yourself from all notion of superiority. You come from an arrogant culture; admit that. Anabaptists, however, believe in a servanthood stance. Make yours a non-bossy presence.
- Undo your dominance. Especially for oppressed peoples who have come to know whites only in their authority-holding role is it necessary to undo our own need to manage and control. Ownership, management, and control are basic ingredients of Western culture, but there is little room for these concepts in the Scriptures.
- Do not get into the fray of competitive denominationalism. Instead, seek to participate in the existing fellowships where you can worship, pray, seek counsel, study Scripture, and make friends. Denominations were born in their own national and cultural settings elsewhere. These should not be imposed upon homogeneous native communities. Of fracturing they have already enough. Let not the church contribute to a divide-and-conquer mentality that is already so prevalent. Instead, contribute to the needed peoplehood waiting to be reborn.
- Read the Scriptures and interpret the Bible *with* rather than *for* the people. Codiscovered biblical truth in a cross-cultural setting has to be one of the most fertile undertakings possible.
- Identify yourselves fully, personally, denominationally, culturally, and keep no one guessing about the real you. True cross-cultural exchange requires mutual exposure. Only then is there an adequate basis for full two-way communication. Any masking of one's identity will wear through when the wear and tear begins. If the masking was done intentionally or due to ethnic shame, then there is almost the unsurmountable problem of deceit to be faced. To declare your own peoplehood is a prerequisite for discovering and honoring the peoplehood of others.
- Wait for feedback to what you say or do. Hear it, see it, read it, feel it. No one's work is complete without having discovered the response of the people. The response cannot be forced. It takes the development of special antennae to get genuine feedback cross-culturally. Develop those antennae.
- Acknowledge the centrality of the Scriptures. Although there is growing rejection of the church and much mistrust of missionaries, there remains a widespread and deep respect for the Scriptures. Preachers who do not refer to the biblical texts or those who pretend to know it but are erroneous quickly lose their entrée. I cite a semi-humorous account of such a preacher.

One of the stories floating among the Garden Hill Ojibway people is about the man who claimed to be a minister. Apparently, this preacher got to God's Lake where he conducted preaching services every night. But the people got suspicious because he never read from the Bible when he preached. The man replied that he was blind and therefore could not read. Besides, he told them, he knew the Bible from memory.

At the next service the man preached again. This time he warned the people about all their sins and that God would punish them just like he did a long time ago when the people turned against God and Moses had to build the ark. You find that story written in the third chapter of Joseph.

Voluntary Service and evangelism—branches of the same tree

While the establishment of tangible fellowships of faith have not usually been the stated goals of Voluntary Service ventures, such fellowships have nevertheless been born and sustained. The nature of the gospel simply generates a fellowship. Peoplehood spawns wherever two or three gather, walk together, or serve in the name of Christ. So it happened with Voluntary Service work. MCC and perhaps other VS administrations are both criticized and lauded for the spawning of new church fellowships. The criticism comes from those who expect a greater verbal emphasis on the gospel. The criticism for not doing enough evangelism often comes from a sponsoring constituency that sees all of Christian witness in terms of church planting. Yet that same church constituency expects its own mission boards and evangelism committees, rather than MCC, to do the actual church planting.

The lauding for going easy on church planting comes from those who have witnessed excessive multidenominational competition in the area of evangelism and church planting. These

have seen biblical virtue in an ecumenical approach that wishes to avoid further fragmentation. The 37 years of MCC's work in Newfoundland and Labrador would be a case in point. Although the influence of the Christian witness is widespread among a wide range of denominations ranging from Roman Catholic to Moravian to Pentecostal and others, no visible Mennonite fellowship has been established. The lauding also comes especially from the native communities who have been wearied from contending religious visitors. Repeatedly, MCC has been welcomed where we declare that our workers will participate in the local churches but that our intention is not to establish a separate Mennonite church. That stance goes well with much of the native people's own orientation to multidenominationalism. Frequently, given families will attend many or all of the religious group functions even though the individual denominations want to claim each for their own.

Are voluntary servants evangelists? Yes. They are carriers of the gospel, portraying it in word and deed. They seek to be builders of locally validated, biblically grounded peoplehood. Perhaps an overemphasis on the deed has at times characterized Voluntary Service. And perhaps that overemphasis was a corrective on evangelistic words that were no longer believable. Thus one branch grows to balance out the branch on the other side of the tree.

Emmaus disciples 2000 years later

Here we are, walking *with* people, not ahead of them, not behind them, but in step with the people as did the Emmaus disciples when Jesus joined them. Faith can be shared en route in our daily vocations. The bread, is it not ours to share with the people in need? Do not our eyes get opened as we eat with the people, even with those not like us? Will we not recognize Jesus as we share the bread, as we simply commune with one another, as we take time for one another, as we seek some clarity over the complexities of death and resurrection to the new life?

Will our hearts not be rewarmed as we convene, as we leave behind our dead selves and put trust in the power of the resurrection so that we can walk with joy and be reborn to that which is everlastingly and corporately new.

How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

TAKIO TANASE

Editors note: *Mary Alene Miller, a Mennonite Board of Missions worker in Japan since 1963, interviewed longtime Japanese Mennonite Takio Tanase as he and his wife were preparing to move.*

Miller: If the Japanese habit of opening a conversation with the traditional apology-formula is ever appropriate, it is today. I'm sorry to bother you at such an inconvenient moment, when you are packing up to move from Obihiro to Tokyo after serving as director of the Eastern Hokkaido Bible School for 15 years.

Tanase: You don't have to apologize. When I look at the content of the questionnaire, I think the problem is not timing, but am I able to answer these questions?

M: I'm sure you can.

T: As I gather up my thoughts about how my understanding of mission has developed, I make new sense out of the ordinarily tiresome and exhausting job of packing. The whole process of pulling up and moving is teaching me something with a new force.

It's partly the experience of sorting through stuff—after being in one place so long. We want to pick up and move on, and the process drags us down. We have to decide what we're going to do with it all—what to take, what to leave, what to throw away. Now that I'm faced with this little personal crisis, I long for, what you would call in English, "a more vagabond style of living."

I think that as Christians we should live in such a way that we are ready to be mobile. We should cultivate more rootlessness. We have a word in Japanese meaning to do something *migaru ni*, nimbly and without encumbrances. We should live so that we could nimbly pick up and leave. We are all potential Abrahams. We have all heard of the sojourner aspect of discipleship. That's what I'm talking about.

M: You're suggesting that the sojourner aspect of the gospel has been part of your theology, and now personal experience is bringing it into sharper focus. But moving from place to place—for instance, being transferred from one company to another or from one school to another—is fairly typical of the Japanese experience, fairly cultural, wouldn't you say?

T: Oh, it's Japanese all right. But I'm saying that maybe some of us in the church, some of us Mennonites, have burrowed in too deeply. Somehow we have forgotten the expectation and mentality that we will move on or that we need to be ready to pull up and leave. By whose order and for what purpose does the Japanese Christian move? Do we go or stay for the sake of the company boss, or because the church needs us to go or stay?

Everyone, not only missionaries and pastors, is included in the moving category. Your questionnaire asks about core elements of the gospel, and I think this subject relates. And here I acknowledge that the mobility of missionaries who have worked in Hokkaido has deeply impressed me.

That sojourn, the nimbly moving along, is something I've admired in missionaries, and now it is brought home to me as my wife and I struggle to be more nimble.

M: What does the term "over the years" mean in your life? You have been a believer for about thirty years now. Where have you come from in your spiritual pilgrimage?

T: I was born and raised in Tokyo, the fifth son in a family of seven children. My father was a devout Buddhist in the sense that after my younger brother died, he remembered him every morning with prayers and scripture reading before the altar—I have that daily picture of him in my mind. Three of my older brothers were in the war, although I was in high school at the time. Our home in Shinagawa Ward wasn't bombed, although destruction was certainly all around us at the end of 1945. I always had a deep interest in English, though my studies were

greatly interrupted during my teen years. After the war, I went to the Tokyo City Employment Office and got a job at General MacArthur's headquarters. My job title was "busboy," but actually I waited on tables in the dining hall. You can imagine what kind of daily lesson in English that was.

Just having a job did not cure the deep sense of despair and loss of hope most of us felt in those times. Eventually I made my way to Hokkaido where a friend was helping some Mennonite missionaries. I remember attending my friend's baptism. I was sure I wasn't interested in religion, but I was deeply impressed by his words of testimony on that occasion. He said that for him "God gave existence meaning." These words shook me up because I longed for that kind of meaning. You know the rest of the story. I kept on relating to missionaries Ralph and Genevieve Buckwalter.

I was drawn to Buckwalters as people. To be perfectly honest I was not impressed by the content of Ralph's Bible teaching. I was too deeply prejudiced against the U.S. to listen. It was not what he said about the gospel but the kind of people he and Genevieve were. It was not his words, but his portrayal of who Jesus is. I didn't analyze it that way then. But in recent years I have seen how important it is in proclaiming the gospel to show who Jesus is. Because I saw Jesus through the authenticity of missionaries, I wanted to read the Bible. Then my foundation of faith was laid, but the core element was that initial expression—the look at Jesus. Seeing Jesus through the proclaimer of the gospel changes us into new people—into sojourners.

M: In returning to Tokyo, you have come full circle in your pilgrimage—you are back home. But before I ask for more detail about your assignment in Tokyo, I wonder if you'd comment about your family. I'm thinking about your brothers' deaths. This is personal, I know. Do you mind talking about that?

T: Well, it was unusual and shocking that in the space of less than two years I lost my three brothers. The third brother's death was the hardest. He and I had always been close. We could talk together. He could rub it in that I was a Christian, but it was a kindly sort of teasing. We didn't hold anything against each other because of it. In the last stages of his cancer we drew even closer. I felt he was reaching out to God in a new way. I sent him books to read. I went to Tokyo three times in those months to be with him. His whole attitude changed. He enjoyed a visit from Charles Shenk. He said he would like to go to church. I could see his response to God working in his life.

But you know, the books I sent him weren't really what I wanted to share with my brother about Christ. I knew his needs and his kinds of questions. They didn't pick up the conversation about faith where he was.

You asked about my future in Tokyo. This experience with my brother brought home to me the challenge of writing Christian faith material—something that isn't confusing, but is still grounded in the New Testament, with an Anabaptist orientation. I've thought for a long time about doing this kind of writing, especially when I was helping Norman Kraus in his Christology course. My goal, my audience, was crystallized in the experience with my own brother.

Actually, I know that the opportunity to write is only a part of the assignment in Tokyo. We will work in the Honan Cho congregation as part of the team ministry. Last summer Aiko and I spent a month with the congregation during Charles and Ruth Shenk's furlough. It was good to meet and learn to know the members. We feel excited about the potential leadership and gifts in that congregation.

M: You have even closer family members in Tokyo now than your siblings.

T: (smiling happily) We don't deny the good feeling of going to Tokyo where our children live. We look forward to renewing our family circle. But I have to make a little announcement. We've just heard that our son Eliya has gotten a position as lecturer in the English department at Hokusei Women's Junior College in Sapporo. So the irony is that he won't be in Tokyo after all. Our daughter Marie, however, will be there.

M: Congratulations! I'm happy for Eliya, and for you. Your feelings must be a little complicated. We in Sapporo will have to become Eliya's family. What will Aiko be doing in Tokyo? She's downstairs packing now, so I won't call her up. Can you speak for her?

T: In all my translating and writing these years we've worked as a team. I talk into my tape recorder; Aiko transcribes, edits, writes, rewrites. You can imagine how valuable this support is. But our teamwork is deeper than that. Her grasp of her studies at Eastern Hokkaido Bible School is deep and profound, which strengthens our work and partnership. Besides this team work, I know she'll be active in the congregation in Tokyo, too.

M: Some of us fear selfishly that you have a long-range commitment to Tokyo and that your gifts will no longer be available to us here in Hokkaido. What do you see happening in the Mennonite church of Japan in the coming years?

T: I think it is a misunderstanding to suppose we'll be in Tokyo forever. We are eager about and deeply committed to this Tokyo assignment. We feel the Hokkaido Conference is lending us to the brothers and sisters in Tokyo, and our hearts will always be with our Hokkaido friends. If the appropriate time comes and our Tokyo assignment is completed, we are open to returning to Hokkaido or to another field. I'm getting up in years you know. In a few years I'll be sixty—can you believe that?

M: Considering how young you look, no, but we are deeply middle-aged ourselves.

T: Not only Aiko and I, but many of the current pastors or congregational leaders are my age or in their late fifties. Almost every congregation is affected by a growing number of older people. What does this mean for the Mennonite church in Japan? For some leaders it is a problem to know where they will retire and what they will live on. We need to be thinking as a denomination of the nature and potential of ministry by older, retired people. We needn't limit the realm of ministry to our Japanese congregations. Perhaps some of us should sojourn to other short-time Asian assignments. At any rate, we must recognize the aging factor as a potential.

But the really good news in the church is that we have a growing young generation of believers in their twenties and thirties. A good number of these people are second-generation Christians. Some are being trained for service in the church. They are a gift from God and bring new hope and life to our congregations.

M: I certainly agree. Thanks so much for sharing how your understanding of mission has developed. I must let you return now to the nimble process of goods-sorting, life-sorting, and moving.

How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

GERALD STUCKY

I don't recall always wanting to be a missionary, as some people do. The thought of being a missionary did occur to me during family devotions, and I suggested to the Lord that if he didn't mind, I'd settle for being a Sunday school teacher. Initially God seemed to accept my "plea bargaining." I had only a remote idea of what it might mean to be a missionary, but as a Christian I felt it important to be willing "to go where you want me to go, dear Lord, and do what you want me to do." That may be the most basic ingredient for mission work, for with that attitude we open ourselves to the guidance of God. During the past years God has patiently and graciously given us some insights in regard to missionaries and mission work. I will mention these randomly rather than in order of importance.

A good orientation. My wife and I came to Latin America right out of seminary with little orientation. We have often wished that young candidates could make a preliminary visit to a mission field in order to alleviate later disillusionment, frustration, and failure. New missionaries should have a *mature* Christian faith, a personal experience with Christ, an empowering encounter with the Holy Spirit (something more than theological speculation), and experience in transmitting faith in order to bring people into a new birth experience. It is not easier to do that in a foreign culture than in one's own. Churches sometimes send out workers to do abroad what they don't do very well at home, somehow expecting miracles to happen. Thank God, miracles do sometimes happen.

Capacity to understand and love people. People are the most important ingredient of mission work. Incredible as it may seem, some missionaries find that they do not love the people of the new culture. In fact, their words and actions reveal a dislike and disdain for the people around them. Local people soon know whether they are sincerely loved and appreciated. We must seek to learn from them, for they have much to teach us.

Appreciating the new culture and respecting the differences. Different ideas of time, money, family life, the work ethic, are also valid. Difficult as it may be to refrain from making comparisons, it is of greatest importance that we learn to appreciate, accept, and understand the ways of the new culture—and never to humiliate them by bragging about the "North American way."

Separating Christian gospel from cultural heritage. In Colombia we made many mistakes. Was it really part of the gospel that it was all right to play baseball on Sunday but not to go swimming; that no buying or selling should be done on Sunday, when in a rural Latin culture the big market day is on Sunday; that the wash should be hung up as early as possible on Monday morning; that church services should begin at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays; that pews should be in straight lines; that church buildings should have towers; that Wednesday night is for prayer meeting? It is important to sift out the chaff, and to learn to know the spirit rather than the legalities of the gospel.

Recognizing our narrow ideas of the church. Growing up in a Mennonite community where there were no poor, blacks, foreigners, or Catholics, my knowledge of these people was minimal. Were Catholics really part of the body of Christ? Time has shown us that true believers are found in the Catholic as well as the Protestant church, and that we need not make Protestants out of Catholics. It is our mission to witness to the light and life of Christ to those who have not yet found liberation and the salvation that the gospel of Christ offers.

Bringing good news of liberation. One thing has become clear to us: the underlying purpose in our lives and activities, social or religious, is to be sensitive to people's need to know the liberating gospel. All other activities are secondary. The gospel is much more than "saving souls for heaven"; it is a message that must transform the present life through the new birth and discipleship. The Christian is to be light and life in a confused and corrupt world.

Relinquishing ownership of the work. Sometimes missionaries are used of God to establish new churches or institutions. Although considerable investment of time, money, property, and effort is made, God shows us that this investment is our *gift* to God's kingdom and the national church—we are not to seek to retain ownership or control. The Holy Spirit is more than adequate to guide and form the church. We are servants, not masters, and co-workers, not superiors, to our national brothers and sisters.

Recognizing Anabaptism's significant contribution. We rejoice in the contribution Anabaptism makes to the Christian interpretation of the gospel in Colombia. Christians in today's violent world are longing to know the gospel's nonviolent alternative. We have become more conscious of institutional violence, of the desperation of the masses living in poverty, of injustice and misery, and of our responsibility to fight against the principalities and powers that are enslaving and dehumanizing our fellow humans. We need to share a liberating gospel of hope, justice, love, and the divine order of human equality. We have also learned to appreciate the charismatic and Pentecostal contribution that Latin-American Christians are making to our churches and Christian practice. Some things appear to be excessive, superficial, and unacceptable, and it is good to have a spirit of discernment and a capacity to sift out the chaff from the wheat. But their enthusiasm, joy, freedom in worship, and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is permeating Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic churches. Happy is the missionary who is not so much concerned about transmitting traditional North American Protestant practices and prejudices as one who is open to new insights, experiences, and practices in Christian worship. We have much to give and we have much to receive.

Identifying with one's mission. In a span of 40 years, we have observed many missionaries come and go. Each has made a contribution, though some were frustrated. We have observed the importance of new workers identifying wholeheartedly with their new mission. It is important not to keep "one foot in heaven," but to jump into the work with both feet. It takes time to shift, to be sure. But in a sense, it is necessary to forget North American sports, the nice house that was left behind, the cars, friends, family, and become interested in new things—new sports, new people, new events, new politics. It is important not to live an island existence nor to move basically among North American expatriates and have them as our closest friends. It is essential to make friends among the nationals, to love them, to

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Gerald Stucky and his wife, Mary Hope, recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of their service in Colombia under General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission. Stuckys retired in August 1987.

learn to know them at close range, to fit into their culture in regard to guitars, length of worship services, flexibility of time, etc. People in Latin America are known to be "warm, friendly, open, and close." The North American's tendency to keep people at arm's length and not to use touch will not help us make friends for ourselves or for Christ.

Developing a mature conscience. Coming out of a society and a church background that tends to see things as black and white, it is often very difficult to live in a society that sees things as gray. The attitudes in Latin-American society toward government, law, stoplights, tips (bribes), contraband, alcoholic beverages, income tax, business on Sunday, and many other areas of life, are much more flexible than our strict, conservative, ethical interpretations of life. To live in a Latin-American context with a traditional Protestant, perhaps puritanical, frame of reference is not only confusing but can be devastating to the scrupulously conscientious. To what extent can we be all things to all people so that by all means we might be able to save some?

Sharing special talents or services. Besides being able to communicate the gospel evangelistically, it is important to have other special talents or services to offer. This may take many forms, like being able and willing to teach piano, play the guitar, mechanical skills, teach English, teach in a school or seminary, organize seminars, do nursing, sing, etc. It is important to be able to plug into the daily lives of people, to help them obtain something they long for.

We have learned that missionary service is not a sacrifice but rather a God-granted and blessed privilege. There are many compensations and rewards in a missionary's life. Missions will always be an unfinished task, and we are not to deplore how little we have been able to accomplish. Rather we are to rejoice that God has permitted us to participate in the advancement of the kingdom.

In review

Touch the World Through Prayer. By Wesley L. Duewel. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Francis Asbury Press, 1986, 255 pp., $3.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Jack Patton

Wesley Duewel, former missionary to India and past president of OMS International, has written a guidebook on the place and power of prayer in world evangelization. He calls us back to basics in reminding us of the importance of intercessory prayer and its necessity in the life of every Christian. Duewel challenges us with a vision that Christians can make a difference by their prayers, a ministry that will not only touch but change the world.

The book is motivational in essence and evangelistic in nature. It develops a theology of and biblical background for prayer, demonstrates the importance and effect of prayer, and presents a step-by-step system for organizing a prayer list, enlisting prayer partners, forming a prayer circle, and claiming specific promises in intercessory prayer.

Pastor Duewel has held prayer retreats around the world and has read widely in prayer literature. One gets the impression that the book is made up of written sermons presented at these meetings. The strength of his approach is the use of thought-provoking questions and faith-building illustrations that bridge scriptural theory to practical reality. However, there are no footnotes or bibliographies included; it is disconcerting to read long quotations or encounter historical stories with no origins given. The book could be greatly strengthened by chapter summaries and a Scripture index. These weaknesses are offset, however, by the encouragement and affirmation of faith gained from Duewel's rich experiences in the interdependent realms of missions and prayer.

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Structures for Mission. By Marvin D. Hoff. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985, 243 pp., $11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Rodney J. Sawatsky

Recounting the evolution of any organizational structure is not particularly inspiring reading except for the principals and principles involved. *Structures for Mission* is no exception. And since readers of this journal are likely not principals in this particular story, our primary interest is in the principles.

The full title reads *The Reformed Church of America: Structures for Mission*. Marvin D. Hoff, a longtime minister and church executive in the RCA and currently president of Western Theological Seminary, is obviously an insider to much of the story he tells. Yet Hoff maintains a remarkable candor as he chronicles the missionary structures and funding of the RCA with special emphasis on the development of the United Advance and the General Program Council since World War II.

The novice to this material will be overwhelmed by the pace of structural change in this denomination and the details become a blur. Unfortunately, there are inadequate contexts for these changes to permit real understanding for what is happening. We hear rumors of theological divisions and of crises surrounding such events as a proposed merger that failed, all of which influenced the denomination's structures, but Hoff tells us little more. The reader is left guessing why another new structure is needed and why the particular new shape emerges.

There are at least two principles of general interest that do emerge from the detail. For one, the structures of the RCA since the American Revolution were not premised on well-considered Reformed ecclesiological principles but were simply pragmatic adjustments to particular events and situations. To what extent is this a generalizable phenomenon? Did the new denominationalism produce structures in most North American bodies which related less to traditional understandings of the church than to an interest in getting the job done? What has this done to ecclesiology?

A second principle relates to fund-raising. The RCA recently returned to fund-raising appeals particularized by and for the various agencies of the church, especially foreign missions, after a number of years of a united appeal. The united approach for some time corrected the interagency competition for funds and persuaded members that all phases of the church's program were missions in orientation. But the United Advance no longer serves its purpose. General appeals apparently are too vague, while special appeals catch the imagination. Saving particular souls raises money, building the kingdom in general apparently doesn't.

The RCA has no monopoly on these two and similar issues. This study might, however, serve other denominations for purposes of comparison, and other scholars for purposes of developing further generalizable principles regarding structures for mission.

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The Expanded Mission of "Old First" Church. By Raymond J. Bakke and Samuel K. Roberts. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1986, 121 pp., $8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Dennis Fast

This book was produced in response to a consultation on "Old First Church Ministry" conducted by the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., and is an attempt to give expression to the reflections and conclusions arising from that gathering.

Old Firsts are those churches which at one time were at the center of power and life of a community. Most of them were founded by believers caught up in the evangelical zeal of the Second Great Awakening but now have the common experience of falling on hard times. Whether they are town churches in county seats or city-center churches, they have experienced the pain of rapidly changing environments and have not always handled that change well.

The question being asked is, Can Old First Church recover a sharp focus on ministry and recapture a vision for the future? The authors conclude that there can be a future for Old Firsts and point out conditions which they see as crucial to that happening. Among these are a theological perspective of being the presence of Christ in a community, a coming to terms with the social context of that community, a willingness to modify internal structure and to recover a public mission—not the old mission of power but a new mission of serving the trust of people.

Bakke and Roberts suggest that the most crucial variable in renewal of Old Firsts rests in leadership. Although a recovery of history is important and theological perspective and missions are essential, none will likely happen without bold leadership. The authors say, "Part of the genius of leadership is the ability to articulate and focus a vision for people so that they begin to believe that no sacrifice is too great in the service of fulfilling that vision." The leaders of Old Firsts in the past must have had that ability, and the leaders today need it too.

A section on ministry ideas adds a practical note to the book, and one chapter, addressed to ministry institutions outside of the American Baptist circle, conveys an attitude of openness and concern for the universal church. The principles and guidelines could be used for those ministering beyond Old First. The book is concise, insightful, and applicable to a broad range of ministry institutions.

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Hearing and Knowing—Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa. By Mercy Amba Oduyoye. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 168 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by David W. Shenk

This book pulls together historical, anthropological, biblical, and theological perspectives, interweaving them with a clear focus on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior within an African context. The book is remarkably objective in describing pain and failure and the mission of the church while also keeping a clear focus on the central message of the gospel.

The book is divided into two sections, the first a historical overview, the second analyzing themes in African theology.

Appropriately the historical overview begins with the apostolic roots of Christianity in Africa. Mercy Amba Oduyoye perceives within the tensions of the church in Africa during the first five centuries themes which are present in modern Christian experience as well, tensions between colonial expressions of Christianity and indigenous faith. It is sad to read her observation that when she was growing up in the 1940s and '50s with missionaries she did not see the missionaries' "capacity to live in fellowship with others unless the others meant other Europeans" (p. 33). She observes that quickly Africans began to perceive in the Bible much deeper and meaningful expressions of salvation than the missionaries communicated. The dualism of Western missionary theology was incompatible with the holism of biblical faith.

The book includes a considerable discussion of the interrelation between African traditional religions and biblical faith. The author demonstrates keen awareness of theological issues involved. She gently and accurately describes the various positions of modern African scholars on these issues and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the various viewpoints. In all of this discussion, Oduyoye repeatedly affirms the primacy of the Bible and of the Lord Jesus Christ in African Christian experience.

The last half of the book deals with themes in African theology and is one of the most remarkable statements of biblical theology in African context I have read. For example, the chapter on the relevance of the Exodus event in African aspirations for liberation is profound. Oduyoye uncovers dimensions of the biblical Exodus which are salient indeed. The Exodus, she says, has become "our story." The parallels between Moses the charismatic leader and a number of modern African leaders in the liberation struggles are striking.

The chapter entitled "Except God" is an eloquent plea for monotheistic faith. The God of the Bible is no other than the God whom Africans have always been aware of, the God of all creation. The chapter on Jesus states, " 'Jesus saves' is written large on the minds and hearts of African Christians . . ." (p. 97).

This chapter is awesome in its revelation of the depth in meaning of Jesus as Savior from an African perspective. The author views Jesus as Savior against the backdrop of some of the inadequacies and dehumanization of African traditional society. "The Christ of Christianity touches human need at all levels, and Africans are but ordinary members of the human race feeling the need for salvation" (p. 99). She highlights two significant themes in African understandings of Jesus as Savior: his victory over death and evil and his ministry of reconciliation and redemption.

The author appeals for continual return to the biblical story of the covenant people and Jesus; otherwise, Christian faith becomes relativistic and syncretistic. She declares,

> *The good news to Africa is that people and communities have to be willing to die to all that dehumanizes on both personal and corporate levels. Those who believe that Christ lives forever presenting us to God continually (Heb. 5:7; 7:25), will venture to live a life of total dependence on God by taking what He commands seriously. Jesus saves us from the insecurity that breathes distrust in God. Herein lies the particularity of Christ, whatever the culture Christ relates to the needs of the people.*

Equally impressive is the chapter on covenant and community in which the author compares and contrasts the biblical covenant experience in both the Old and New Testaments to that of traditional African societies. With dramatic insight she helps us understand the scandal of Judas' betrayal of Jesus after having dipped his hand into the same dish with Jesus. She further develops the covenant theme in her chapter on Trinity in which we see this perception of God as being a revelation of authentic, loving community. Trinitarian theology and covenant theology belong together. In the covenantal sacraments of baptism and communion we are invited into the kind of loving and person-affirming community which God experiences within himself.

Mercy Oduyoye chooses to demonstrate the practicality of the gospel in her amazing chapter on feminism. She does not wear rose-tinted glasses in her perception of the status of women in traditional society. The same perceptive critique is leveled against the church, especially in its Western expressions. In this chapter she brings into focus the biblical and especially New Testament perceptions of womanhood and appeals both to African traditional religion and the church to conform to

the good news that in Christ there is neither male nor female.

If I were teaching a course on the gospel in African context, this book would become a text for me. Although it is not a systematic theology and the topics addressed are eclectic, the hermeneutical and anthropological methodology is outstanding and completely refreshing. I personally gained new insights on the nature of the gospel and the preciousness of African culture through reading this book.

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Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business. By Neil Postman. New York: Viking, 1985, 180 pp., $15.95; New York: Penguin, 1986, 192 pp., $6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ron Byler

Neil Postman, professor of Communications Arts and Sciences at New York University, maintains that entertainment has become the dominant form of public discourse in our society. He claims that discourse in America, under the governance of the printing press, was generally coherent, serious, and rational. Conversely, as typography moves to the periphery of our culture and television takes its place at the center, the seriousness, clarity, and above all, the value of public discourse has dangerously declined (p. 16).

Postman confronts us with serious questions: "What is television? What kinds of conversations does it permit? What are the intellectual tendencies it encourages? What sort of culture does it produce" (p. 84)? Does television tend to suppress the content of ideas in order to accommodate the requirements of visual interest (p. 92)?

Television news presents us with a fragmented world in which a report on world famine, a story about a local fire, and an ad for feminine hygiene products are given equal importance and presented in an equal amount of time. Television has distorted our view of religion and has encouraged the development of religious personalities who promote a version of Christianity to their viewers that offers them not what they need but what they want. And television commercials have profoundly influenced our habits of thought. An average American will have seen over one million television commercials in his or her lifetime (p. 126).

On many accounts, Postman is alarmingly accurate. Television has influenced our lives dramatically, and many of those influences have been negative. However, Postman oversteps himself with one of his primary premises—that the printed word is inherently better able to convey information than the visual image. That assertion has enormous implications for those who communicate the Christian gospel in a media-dominated society.

Many Christian scholars, like Postman, have been skeptical of signs, symbols, and other forms of visual communication for the propagation of the gospel. Theologians and scholars have tended to be more comfortable with words or reason and logic than with pictures and sounds of feeling and emotion.

Thomas Boomershine, biblical scholar at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, differs with Postman. He proposes that each period of media change requires major changes in the way Christians communicate the Christian message. He charts those shifts in communication patterns as the major form of communication in society as evolved from the oral tradition to manuscript to print to silent print to the electronic media.

Today the interpretation and communication of the Bible happen primarily in the media world of silent print. Says Boomershine, "We study ancient documents in silence using tools such as lexicons, concordances, commentaries, and monographs which are read in silence. We produce books and papers of interpretation which are also read in silence. The only exception to this process is the reading of the Scriptures in public worship and the oral interpretation of the tradition in preaching" ("A Sketch of Christianity in Ancient and Modern Media" was a lecture given by Boomershine at the Religious Education and Telecommunications Conference, Dayton, Ohio, 1985).

Boomershine believes that three basic responses to media change can be identified in the Christian tradition: resistance, capitulation, and appropriation. These same three patterns are represented in the age of electronic media. The basic response of orthodox Christianity to this new media world is resistance which "has been led by the intellectual leaders of the churches, who have continued to write books as if nothing has changed in the culture." Conversely, the response of fundamentalist Protestants has been to create the electronic church, "a capitulation response." "The primary authority in these movements is not the Bible or the tradition of a church. Rather, it is what Americans will support as an easy equation of American values with a highly selective interpretation of Christianity."

Boomershine challenges us to reinterpret the tradition of the Christian religion in the medium of the age and courageously take the risks associated with that effort. Rather than name television the villian of our society, Boomershine urges us to appropriate the new media as means for the faithful interpretation of Christianity.

How, then, do we appropriate the electronic media as a means for the faithful interpretation of Christianity to our culture? First, we must stop simply bemoaning the negative effects of television on our society and begin to use this medium to our advantage. Conservative estimates indicate that fully one-third of American households now own a video cassette recorder (VCR). Boomershine and Postman would agree: people will watch television. The issue is not **if** we watch but **how** we watch.

When we watch, we must understand the economics of television. Programs are created to sell products. Despite that fact, good television programs do emerge. The editor of *Electronic Media* says, "The best, most popular show on TV these days uses no car chases, no helicopters, no cleavage, and no fistfights. It is 'The Cosby Show' . . . good writing, fine acting, intelligent stories that viewers can relate to . . ." (March 10, 1986). "Cosby" and other current shows like "St. Elsewhere" and "Cagney and Lacey" give us an insight into the world in which we live and the people to whom we relate every day. Don't be afraid to watch quality television shows and talk about them with your family and friends.

Second, we can learn much from the finely crafted programs and commercials that enter our homes through television. Postman urges us to view with suspicion the programs and commercials that "have the advantage of vivid, visual symbols . . . that have not only irrefutable emotional power but, like biblical parables, are ambiguously didactic." To the contrary, we must recognize the power of the visual and the story (fully half of the Bible is stories) to communicate our message. Boomershine believes that the power of biblical stories is that they literally happen again through the retelling.

Further, we can through video engage in compassion and solidarity that are essential in loving God. Can anyone refute the power television had in mobilizing Americans against the Vietnam War? Postman contends that television has created an information glut—an envi-

ronment that encourages political and social impotency. I would argue that television has encouraged us to believe that our actions, however small, can help lessen world hunger and can help ease the pain of our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua and the Philippines.

Knowledge of the visual media can even help us communicate in traditional worship settings. The Sunday morning sermon is perhaps the best proof that the church still believes in miracles! For many in our pews the Sunday morning sermon is the major biblical input for the week. Yet we continue to rely far too heavily on the written and spoken word to communicate the gospel message. Use images and stories! Find ways to incorporate music, art, dance, and drama into the worship setting. Let's make our worship experiential. Many churches are also gearing up to use video in a variety of church settings. Sunday school sessions, new members' classes, retreats, and teacher training workshops can all be enhanced by using short video materials for inspiration or discussion.

Finally, Postman believes that the nature of television (slick, fast-paced, image-oriented) precludes the church using it for ministry to the public. I'm not so sure. "Catch the Spirit," the United Methodists' weekly television program, uses stories to capture an alternative vision of the world and the church at work. "Another Family Farm," created by the American Lutheran Church, captures the plight of one American farm family and encourages viewers to support people in need around them. The Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ have created 30-second spots that present the church as a caring community. These programs and others are examples of the church using electronic media competently and with integrity.

"The major task of the church's mission in every age," says Thomas Boomershine, "is the mastery of the most powerful medium of mass communication." That, in my mind, is much closer to the appropriation of this medium for the intent of the great commission than Postman's critique of the visual media.

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The Churches of China: Taking Root Downward, Bearing Fruit Upward. By Britt E. Towery, Jr. Hong Kong: privately published, 1986, 203 pp., HK$20 (pb) (available in USA through Cooperative Services International, Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230)

Reviewed by Hugh D. Sprunger

Towery served as a Southern Baptist missionary for 25 years in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Presently based in Hong Kong, he directs the China-related work of Cooperative Services International. Since 1982 he has traveled frequently and extensively in China seeking out churches and Christians.

This pocket-size book is not a scholarly work nor a handbook of statistics on the status of Christianity in China. Towery attempts to let Christians in the city and village churches tell their stories and experiences. He gives the reader a small window into the soul of the churches to sense the warmth of spirit and the depth of commitment found there.

In his preface the writer recognizes the difficulties of accuracy and objectivity, of presenting the perspectives of Chinese Christians and avoiding distortions caused by seeing with Western eyes. He is concerned, in brief space, to give a fair and balanced picture of the complex phenomenon of the churches in China. His picture is encouraging and affirming in contrast with articles and books written by other writers who voice suspicions, mistrust, and criticism of the churches and anything connected with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Towery, naturally, does mention the Southern Baptists more frequently than other groups, but the story about the "post-denominational" churches in China is still exciting to read.

This book consists of two major parts and a brief bibliography. Part One occupies the major part of the book, and six of the eight chapters tell the story of the churches. There is an altogether too brief and selective history of missions in China in chapter three. The last chapter of Part One is significant and valuable: "Knowing the Chinese Mind and Heart, Meeting Questions Most Frequently Asked About the Churches of China." Some of the questions answered are, "Why does a Marxist society allow religious freedom?" "Why does the Church of China leadership never question the party or the government?" "Are there any political pastors?" "Is the Bible published in China 'edited' or 'revised' in any way?"

Part Two gives brief and selective secular and religious information about the 29 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions of China. There are names and addresses of churches and church organizations in some major cities. Obviously the list is incomplete because of the rapid opening of church buildings in the years since 1980-81. The information would be helpful to those who wish to visit a Chinese worship service or who would like to see or visit a Christian church.

The bibliography is brief and will appeal to the general reader more than the scholar. Of the books and periodicals listed with dates of publication, over half have been published in the 1980s.

The reviewer recommends this book for all who are interested in the churches and Christians in China. It would be most suitable for church libraries and would be helpful for any Christians in the West planning a trip to China. It is interesting, easy to read, and convenient to carry. I hope it will have a wide circulation among Christians and churches in North America.

Hugh D. Sprunger is a missionary in Hong Kong. He earlier served in Taiwan from 1954 to 1978.

Mennonites and Reformed in Dialogue: A Study Booklet Prepared by the Mennonite World Conference and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Edited by Hans Georg vom Berg, Henk Kossen, Larry Miller, and Lukas Vischer, Lombard Ill.: Mennonite World Conference, and Geneva, Switzerland: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1986, 89 pp., $3.00 (pb)

Reviewed by Merlin Becker-Hoover

In July 1984 Mennonite and Reformed leaders met formally for the first time in nearly four and a half centuries to look at what they have in common and to seek how to help their people talk and witness together. The earlier Reformation dialogue had resulted in each group taking off in its own direction on unfriendly terms.

But twentieth-century global military threats have caused multiple factions of the church to reexamine their responsibility for and among those forces of destruction. Key to the gospel is the message that God throughout history has been trying to reconcile people to each other and to their Creator. Representatives of the 50-60 million-member World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the one million-member Mennonite World Conference saw a common need to recognize or reconcile long-standing differences between the two groups. This was a prerequisite for working together in a common mission worldwide. They had assumed a mutual separation for centuries.

This study booklet attempts to explain briefly the history, theology, and structure of the Anabaptist and Reformed families of Christian faith. C. J. Dyck for the Mennonites and Allen P. F. Sell and Jean-Marc Chappuis for the Reformed churches make those introductions in broad terms. Both traditions recognize a wide variety of practice and expression, partly because of or in spite of events during the sixteenth century. One wishes that all members of each church would at least know the material presented here about their respective churches.

What will be interesting are the discussions which can be held among members of local communities. Will the conversations be about historical differences, hostilities, theologies, practices? Or will dialogue focus on common mission, with the recognition that there are different approaches to be understood and appreciated? Will the purpose be for joint mission or for stroking a mutual smugness? One hopes that in the context of learning together the Spirit will move members of both groups to renewed mission activity.

Not that it isn't happening. As E. Saxer and Lukas Vischer for the Reformed churches and Heinold Fast for the Mennonites suggest, neither church has historically acted in a saintly manner regarding each other. Current openness on various levels represents a peacemaking approach which can help both churches recognize and use the best of their respective traditions to further Christ's kingdom into the twenty-first century.

This study guide needs to be used. The Mennonite World Conference and the Alliance of Reformed Churches request responses. Perhaps this can be a model for other interchurch—or even intra-Mennonite—dialogue where interest, suspicion, or mutual vision require it.

May there be increased willingness for needed reform as well as increased personal and corporate commitment to radical obedience to the call of Christ.

Merlin Becker-Hoover has served on the staff at Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, since 1977. He and his family are under assignment to Poland with Mennonite Central Committee.

Proclaim Good Tidings: Evangelism for the Faith Community. By Vernard Eller. Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1987, 52pp., $3.95(pb)

Reviewed by Tim Bergdahl

"We've never done it that way before." Vernard Eller calls these the so-called last words of the church, and often sees a difference between what the church should be and what it is.

Proclaim Good Tidings points out some of these differences. The church errs toward an evangelism which stresses the immediate change of an individual from "unsaved" to "saved." While personal decision is important, Eller challenges the church to see a more comprehensive picture of evangelism.

Eller believes that evangelism consists of four inextricably linked parts: 1) proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom as victory through Jesus Christ, 2) gathering in of those liberated, 3) incorporating them into the faith community, and 4) preparing the faith community to await as a bride the coming wedding supper of the Lamb.

Eller sees the love feast as a simple common meal rather than a religious ritual. He suggests that the love feast was the church's way of identifying itself as the body of Christ. It gave the church *as a body* an opportunity for outreach and proclamation, as well as for ministering to local poor and needy. As the community ate with outsiders, their conversation turned naturally to the good news that changed their lives. If one reflects on Christ's own "table ministry," such a view seems surprisingly reasonable. It also seems disquietingly dissimilar to our common practice and understanding.

The author stresses further that if one truly believes he knows the ultimate good news, he will not cease to tell it. Not to proclaim the good news, Eller reasons, is to deny that it is good news.

The church where things happen as they have always happened will not be encouraged by Vernard Eller. He implies that a non-proclaiming Christian is a contradiction in terms. It is in and through the life of the faith community that proclamation should take place. The church for Eller cannot be a hiding place or refuge for Christians. It must be the body of Christ in the world, following the direction of the head. Eller clearly believes that a church living as the body of Christ will soon find itself sitting at table with sinners and outcasts.

I found this book much like meeting a friend. Not everything was said, and not everything was agreed upon. But my vision was broadened and I saw new things.

Tim Bergdahl is a graduate of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. He lives in Clovis, California.

On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Jews, Christians and Liberation Theology. By Dan Cohn-Sherbok. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987, 130pp., $7.95

Reviewed by Menno Wiebe

Dan Cohn-Sherbok, author of this book, is presently a university educator and director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Kent, Canterbury, England.

In six short readable chapters, Cohn-Sherbok illustrates how Christian liberation theologians have redefined several central religious concepts in Christianity to bring them more in line with the Jewish tradition. Each chapter concludes with a rationale for Christians and Jews to intersect at the scene of the oppressed, then work jointly for their liberation.

As both Jews and Christians rediscover Jesus as a Jew within the prophetic tradition, there can be a shared vision for our own time. That vision, says the author, can serve as a link to draw Jews and Christians together. By focusing on the ethics of the kingdom of God, Cohn-Sherbok sees the convergence of Jewish ethics to all of God's creatures, and views such an orientation as basic to New Testament writings as well. Both Christians and Jews portray the kingdom as a struggle for justice and righteousness on earth. Both traditions advance a human partnership with God in bringing about God's rule. The story of the Exodus especially portrays God's liberation of an oppressed Hebrew people from the unjust dominance of the pharaohs. In the Christian tradition, the Lord's Supper, specifically based on the Passover, becomes the ritualized event that links Christians not only to the historical Hebrew slavery in Egypt, but to the oppressed of the contemporary scene.

Among those who experience contemporary oppression are the poor, people of the Third World, inner-city dwellers, unemployed, those suffering from sexual discrimination, and those suffering from the ecological abuse of environment. Wherever humans are socialized into degradation and subservience, there both Jew and Christian can unite in a common cause for creating a better world.

The book is organized by themes with citations from rabbinic literature, the Old and New Testaments, and contemporary liberation theologians. This organization makes it easy to compare traditions on each of the themes.

While the book makes an interesting case for reassessing the polarity between Jewish and Christian traditions, it does so mainly on a conceptual basis. The book lacks specific examples of concrete convergence between representatives of the Jewish and Christian faiths. The link at best is a mental construct. The author's writing does not drip with the realities of real oppression as found in South America, nor with the hunger of third-world people, nor with the struggle for rights among indigenous peoples. Although Cohn-Sherbok cites from liberation theologians such as Dom Helder-Camara, his writings lack the semantics of sweat and agony that typifies Dom Helder's expressions.

Despite the shortcomings, the author presents an interesting challenge for Christian missions and service. He challenges representatives of Jewish and Christian traditions to reread Scripture with the dilemma of the oppressed in mind. He leaves little room for exemption from a this-worldly scene. The book also indirectly challenges Christians to converge at the scene of oppression, something that has been extensively experienced in the work of relief and third-world development.

The book deserves to be on the desk of those who work in evangelism, Christian service, and third-world development. Reading *On Earth as It Is in Heaven* helps readers keep their feet on the ground.

Menno Wiebe is director of Native Concerns for Mennonite Central Committee in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions. By Ruth A. Tucker. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983, 512 pp., $14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Paul Warkentin

Ruth A. Tucker, professor at the Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music and the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has provided a thorough and readable presentation on the history of Christian missions.

Choosing a biographical approach, she shows us how the history of missions can be told in stories of men and women who invested their time, energy, and lives for the proclamation of the good news of God. She has to be commended for binding all these biographies together into one single story. Tucker shows weaknesses, personality flaws, and eccentricities of these humans who nevertheless were men and women of God. Christian missionaries become very human, sometimes embarrassingly so. Mrs. Tucker does not write of only the super missionaries but also of the less known and forgotten servants, such as many single women, mechanics, directors, and linguists. Representatives of third-world missions are incorporated into the story. Also recognized are those who stay home to uphold missionaries with prayer and gifts.

If something is missing in this outstanding book, it is the issue of remissionizing traditional Christian nations. Sometimes one has to ask, "Have the local churches remained faithful?" Tucker looks enthusiastically at the future of Christian missions. This book challenges laypersons as well as pastors and missionaries to a faithful commitment to missions.

Paul Warkentin is engaged in church planting in Europe, currently living in West Germany.

Editorial

The articles in this issue of *Mission Focus* assemble an array of personal experiences and reflections. What does all this tell us about the prerequisites for effective ministry? Are there certain themes which tie together experiences from Colombia, Japan, and Canada? Several things come to mind as I ponder this question.

Foundational to effective ministry is a call based on God's loving intentions for the world. A call dominated by personal compulsion or overweening ambition is ego-centric. In our day, with the pressure to find instantaneous solutions which mark Western culture, we need to ponder the profligate way God invested in preparing people for service. The apostle Paul spent, it is estimated, approximately 14 years in ministry. Behind that relatively brief career stood the finest theological training available in the Jewish tradition and faith, a reported three years in the desert following his conversion, plus several years more under the tutelage of senior Christian leaders. The point of all this preparation was to learn to think God's thoughts and discover what God intended to do in the world. As one reads Paul's numerous reflections on his missionary service, one is struck by his absolute confidence in God and his humility regarding the significance of his own achievements. If there is to be boasting, he says, let it be in the cross of Jesus Christ. This is the true view of effectiveness and efficiency—the cross view.

The second prerequisite is that ministry be attuned to the world. We are sometimes reminded to stop scratching where people are not itching, to refrain from answering questions which people are not asking. This points up the danger of bringing to a given situation our own preconceived notions of what people need. Menno Wiebe makes a sustained appeal to the reader to *listen*—in this case to the native people in North America. Anyone familiar with the history of missions to the native people in North America since the seventeenth century is well aware that the prevailing stance of Christian ministries directed toward these peoples has been quite otherwise. Early in this history the slogan was "Civilization and Christianity." Long after people no longer insisted that native peoples, whether in North America or elsewhere, had to be "civilized" before they could become Christian, the mind-set was still largely the same: "We talk, you listen!" The act of listening requires sensitivity and care. One cannot listen without also being drawn into relationship with the other. Relationship leads to identification and solidarity.

The third prerequisite is to be attuned to oneself. The process of self-emptying does not destroy the self. Rather it results in the transformation of the self. The nontransformed self is marked by contradictions, self-imposed burdens, and personal agenda which get in the way of unencumbered service to others. St. Augustine is often quoted as saying that the human being is restless until it finds its rest in God. The creature is completed through restored relationship to the Creator. Takio Tanase underscores the importance in his pilgrimage of the living faith expressed in the lives of Ralph and Genevieve Buckwalter. This pointed him beyond them to the source of that vitality which he so much admired and longed for.

A fourth dimension is the sense that all of this is part of an unfolding purpose mediated to us by the Holy Spirit. Gerald Stucky can point to lessons learned over a lifetime. These lessons are the gracious fruit of the life of discipleship following a faithful God who intervenes to offer new life and clarified purpose from time to time.

These points may seem quite self-evident after reading these articles. In fact, as one observes what is being done in the name of Christian service and witness, one is struck by the way our activity frequently clashes with the prerequisites outlined here. Does this possibly account for the evident frustration and sense of fruitlessness which is present among us?

—Wilbert R. Shenk

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How Our Understanding of Mission Has Developed

GLENN AND LOIS MUSSELMAN

Early home influences

Glenn: My first convictions for mission were sparked in the setting of a large family and a small congregation. I grew up in a family of nine on a 160-acre farm near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. During the 1930s we all knew what hard work and meager income meant. The farm was mortgaged, we were always in debt, but garden produce kept us from going hungry.

My father was an active layman in our small church, serving as Sunday school superintendent and teacher. He usually read from the Bible each evening at mealtime and led in prayer. A motto on the wall of our living room read, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is no other." In my formative years that verse challenged me to recognize the universal scope of the salvation I had accepted at age twelve.

I remember souvenirs brought back from Argentina by my grandfather that were stored in an attic trunk. In 1917 grandfather went with S. C. Yoder to investigate church planting for the Mission Board in that country. This stirred my curiosity and interest in missions overseas.

Lois: As a child of six I had already decided to be a missionary. The idea must certainly have had its stimulus from the experience of my parents. Somehow I felt that I wanted to take the place of my own mother, Crissie Yoder Shank, who died in Canton, Ohio, eight days after my birth. She and Papa, Charles L. Shank, had served as missionaries in Dhamtari, India, with Mennonite Board of Missions. They had to return to North America in the middle of their period of service because of the poor health of my sister, Ruth.

Nine years after the death of my mother, Papa remarried. My new mother, Lydia Shenk, was a French teacher at Goshen College. The family moved from Canton, Ohio, to Goshen, Indiana, so the children would have opportunity to attend college. Our home became a center of hospitality, entertaining many missionaries who were in the community during furlough.

Early church influences

Glenn: My home church was a conservative congregation of 40 members. Congregational life was marked by intense spiritual activity. Special conferences with visiting speakers were a highlight for me—a window on horizons beyond the congregation. Most of these speakers were entertained in our home, giving me personal contact.

During my adolescent years our pastor related to all children lovingly, and took a very personal interest in me. One day he placed his hand on my shoulder and asked if I sensed a call from God for Christian ministry. I was deeply stirred, but was afraid and reticent at such a holy calling. I pretended such a calling was not for me.

Nevertheless, I was active in the congregation. My ideals and spiritual outlook were shaped by *Youth's Christian Companion*, which gave me conviction for moral living and a sense of the church's mission in the world.

After studying eight years in a one-room school, I found high school a broadening experience. I chose the commercial course—shorthand, bookkeeping, typing—envisioning a professional job in an office, trying to forget God's call to the ministry. I reasoned that college and seminary were impossible because my family couldn't afford it. As an office worker I would contribute to the cause of Christ in a different way.

God had other plans. After graduating from high school I got a job at a local canning factory. But the job was seasonal, and at the close of the harvest I was without a job. A few weeks later I turned 18, subject to the draft. I was able to secure deferment as a farm worker on a neighboring farm, since my oldest brother had deferment on the family farm.

This return to manual labor was a bit humbling. During the next three years I worked on a large poultry farm with six other employees. My fellow workers sometimes made fun of my Christian convictions and lifestyle—especially my nonresistance. During this time God did a lot of molding in my life. At church I was given added responsibility. In teaching Sunday school each week, God whetted my appetite for the Christian ministry. I finally answered that earlier call affirmatively. I was able to save some money from wages earned on the poultry farm to start my college training.

Lois: As a teenager I was challenged in special youth retreats and mission and evangelistic conferences held at the Goshen College Mennonite Church where our family held membership. In my mind and heart I committed myself to Christ and his church, whatever that might involve in the future. Names of some of these speakers that God used to stir my life come to my mind: George R. Brunk, J. D. Graber, Nelson Litwiller, J. W. Shank, John Koppenhaver, and Pastor John Mosemann.

Glenn and Lois Musselman are currently providing pastoral leadership for the Ribeirao Preto Mennonite Church. Glenn and Lois have been working in Brazil under Mennonite Board of Missions since 1955.

I remember especially the stirring missionary message that Pastor Moseman gave to high school students based on Acts 15:26—"Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." He explained to us what hazarding one's life meant—to give one's life entirely for the cause of Christ. He also mentioned that many missionaries have hazarded their lives in Christ's service. I decided definitely that evening to be a missionary for my Lord. Why should I not hazard my life for the one who gave up his life for my salvation? I was 17 at the time, and the following year I began my studies at Goshen College. With the vision of missionary service in the future, I chose a course in nursing.

Preparation

Glenn: College life was invigorating. I was challenged to minister in a world that had just gone through a devastating war. There were crying needs for rehabilitation, relief service, missionary outreach, and church planting in new areas.

The liberal arts courses formed a background and environment of reality which was helpful when I served later as pastor and missionary. I became a member of the Foreign Missions Fellowship, a group focusing on the need for overseas workers to witness to Christ. My future wife, Lois, was a member of this fellowship who also envisioned serving overseas after college. Christian professors and speakers on campus enlarged my vision and stimulated spiritual maturity. Fellowship of students in the small seminary classes was meaningful as we discovered together the meaning of Scripture.

Lois: My thoughts during college training were to prepare myself for foreign missions, possibly India or South America. My uncle, J. W. Shank, was a missionary at that time in Argentina. I also considered working as a midwife in the Kentucky hills. God had specifically called me to be a missionary. The call was clear, but when, where, and how were as yet nebulous. Little by little God assured me of answers to these questions.

One of the classmates I grew to appreciate was Glenn Musselman. We studied in the same classes and often compared notes and grades. Both of us did an analysis of Bach's cantata "Sleepers, Awake." In preparing for this assignment Glenn and I spent time listening together. God was drawing us to each other for a purpose greater than our own happiness!

Both of us became members of the Foreign Missions Fellowship on campus. Our interests and ideals were so similar. I knew I wanted to be a missionary, either single or married. As our friendship developed from dating to possible engagement, I wondered if marriage might compromise my conviction of being a missionary.

Glenn finished his Bachelor of Theology course a year before I finished the nursing course, and he accepted an invitation to pastor his home congregation in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. I was afraid that if I married Glenn I would be a pastor's wife in North America and never live out my conviction of being a missionary overseas. My mother helped me trust God to work out his purpose in this situation. Glenn and I became engaged, and a year later we were married.

Pastoral experience

Glenn: Pastoral experience in the church at Gettysburg was a rich time of learning, sharing, and serving during the first years of our marriage. Preaching, evangelism, and visitation in a familiar setting gave us confidence and training for missionary service in the cultural setting of Brazil where we have been church planters for the past thirty years. God knew we needed that grounding and preparation. The task of mission is one, whether in urban centers of North America or among the teaming masses in other countries.

We arrived in Brazil in 1955. Three other couples were sent to work with us in planting Mennonite churches. After Portuguese language school, we moved to an interior city of 20,000 people where the Bible was a closed book and there were no evangelical churches.

The religious setting was a blend of Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish Catholicism, characterized by crude idolatry, veneration of images, superstitious rites, praying to the saints, finding righteousness through good works, and clerical domination through fear. The Bible was considered dangerous, to be read only by priests, who could then pass on the essential truth. The people lived at the mercy of the church hierarchy who held the keys to their blessing or condemnation by way of the confessional or mass for the dead.

Evangelism and mission in this context implied first providing opportunity for the people to hear and read the Scriptures.

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Focusing on the importance of God's Word as revealer of truth, we distributed the Gospel of John throughout the city. This led to the formation of a church of committed believers, which today is a congregation of 100 members. During the last 30 years Lois and I have worked in four different cities, starting congregations in Sertaozinho, Ribeirao Preto, Jundai, and Curitiba. During seven of those years, I also taught part time at the Mennonite Brethren Seminary in Curitiba.

Lois: I have always felt that our ministry was a team of two working together. There were years, during the birth and early growth of our five daughters, when a large part of my time was devoted to care of the family. But even during those years I accompanied Glenn on home visits and Bible studies, sometimes taking the children along. I supervised summer Bible schools and helped prepare teenagers to teach children.

As an organist, I helped in the worship services, both in accompanying congregational singing and in practicing with choirs and special music groups. As our children grew older and learned to play guitar, our family sang together, using many of the new choruses that were circulating.

My nurse's training was used in teaching health and nutrition as well as in giving immediate care to the sick who came to our door.

In each of the churches we planted I had opportunity to teach the Bible to children, teenagers, and later to mothers. During the past five years my greatest joy has been studying the course "The Challenge of Being a Woman" with other women of the congregations. It is rewarding to see these women study the Bible and to observe their changed lives as they relate to their husbands and children, growing out of their close communion with Jesus.

Glenn and I have been involved in marriage counseling and in retreats for married couples. Our conviction is that churches will be stronger when families are firmly grounded in the truth of God's Word.

Growing edges of thought

Our theological convictions remain grounded in God's Word. To us the Scriptures are authoritative in declaring God's will for the salvation of all persons and for giving direction to the church. We continue to sense an urgency in leading people to a personal commitment and an experience of repentance and faith. Eternal life is a reality, despite the differences of interpretation relating to prophecy and practical application in Christian living. Over the years we have become more open to other viewpoints on secondary concerns. We can't answer all the questions, but we can trust God to be both merciful and just. We have come to appreciate the vast extension of the kingdom of God throughout the world, beyond our own church, including many peoples and churches whose beliefs and convictions differ from ours.

In the past our mission conviction had something of a belligerent thrust in the context of Catholic belief and practices. Our thinking has changed. Catholicism has also experienced significant changes, with a new emphasis on Bible study and commitment to Christ. Some changes were promoted by Vatican II, but other changes reflect the influence of evangelical churches whose Christ-centered ministry has brought into being thousands of vibrant churches with possibly 15 million members.

Another new focus has been preparing Brazilian leaders to carry on the evangelistic extension of the church. We wish we had started our ministry in Brazil with this understanding and emphasis. Missionaries need to be mobile, replacing themselves with trained leaders who in turn train leaders as part of an ongoing ministry. When missionaries can serve under the direction of national leaders, the church has truly taken root. It is also a sign of the maturity of the missionary.

New threats to the Christian faith

As we approach the close of this century, circumstances and events in third-world countries as well as some developed countries have brought into focus a different battleground for Christian churches. Here in Brazil, instead of the Protestant-Catholic theological debate, there is a need to speak to the areas where the Christian message and faith are being challenged, denied, or completely ignored.

Great social scars of poverty, social injustice, drug addiction, disease, and malnutrition enslave millions of lives in this country, creating for them a miserable existence. The Catholic Church, no longer identifying itself with the wealthy ruling class, is defending the poor. The church is exerting nonviolent pressures in political and economic circles to bring about reform. Sometimes violence has erupted in these situations.

In the past, evangelical churches busy with evangelism and church planting have ignored these crying social issues. Changing human hearts through conversion would result in social change over a period of time, they reasoned. More recently these churches are establishing programs of social assistance—day care centers, orphanages, programs for rehabilitation of drug addicts, clinics. Mennonite Central Committee has pioneered volunteer services that answer grass-roots needs. Evangelical candidates have been elected to political offices where they hope to promote social reform.

Materialism and an erosion of moral values, so blatantly evident in the surge of pornography and sexual permissiveness, have created a crisis of unbelief and agnosticism. Related to these paganizing forces that undercut Judeo-Christian moral values is the accelerated growth of non-Christian religious groups, including spiritism, Oriental-mystical cults, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witnessses. These groups grow through intensive activity among the masses.

In view of these non-Christian threats we believe Christian churches, both evangelical and Catholic, need to do more promoting of literature and programs that communicate to Christians and the general public the false teachings of these groups.

We are optimistic about the evangelical churches in Brazil. Many of those founded 75 to 100 years ago now have their own mission programs. The Mennonite Church was founded in 1956 and has this year committed itself to supporting a missionary couple in northern Brazil. What a privilege to participate in the formative, planting stage of this church that now senses its own responsibility to mission in Brazil and beyond.

Bible Translation in the Chaco

ALBERT BUCKWALTER

The birth of a vision

The story of translation in the Argentine Chaco began in 1950 after our appointment to Argentina when Lois and I, through encouragement from Dorothy Snapp McCammon, applied to Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT) for their summer course of linguistics for missionaries to tribal peoples. Mennonite Board of Missions at that time did not recognize the importance of this training, and so it was postponed to our first furlough in 1955. We both took the course at Norman, Oklahoma, as well as one semester at Kennedy School of Missions in Hartford, Connecticut. During our second furlough in 1962-63 we studied a full year at Kennedy in linguistics, anthropology, and Bible translating.

Our interest in Wycliffe came when we read an article in *His* magazine, "We'll Tell Them, But in What Language?" Dr. Kenneth Pike, the leading linguist in the history of WBT, insisted on the importance of Bible translation using the native language. This early inspiration became our latent dream and gave us something to hang on to in the bleakest of times.

Ambiguities of the vision

But let it never be assumed that we had a clear-cut mandate from a people wanting their language to be written down with a subsequent Bible translation in that language. Nor is it true that speakers of the dominant national language encouraged such development among a conquered minority, or that our supporting constituency openly encouraged us from the start. Throughout the years there has never been clear-cut, all-out encouragement. Only in recent years has encouragement come most strongly and most unambiguously from our own constituency and the Bible Societies.

We admit that ambiguities still plague us, and probably always will, both from within Indian life and from the outside world. In the Indian *barrios*, where Indian children tend to run with a crowd which includes children of poor non-Indians, many of the former do not even speak their parents' language, although they may understand it.

The Indians of the Chaco have always downgraded themselves with statements like "I know nothing," and depreciated their fellow-Indians with "Who are you, you're just an Indian!" This attitude of self-derogation manifests itself in many negative ways.

When a non-Indian appears at an Indian church service, many Indian speakers almost totally suppress use of their own Indian language, trying to speak as much as possible in Spanish. Some speakers are extremely difficult to understand under such circumstances, their ability to express themselves being severely limited, but they exhibit no sense of inferiority for their deficient performance in Spanish. Even without the presence of non-Indians, many Indian leaders attempt to impress their own people with mastery of the dominant national language, resulting in a continuous linguistic hodge-podge in public gatherings. The fact that important Spanish terminology often does not get translated demonstrates that the speakers do not really understand its meaning sufficiently to express it in their own language.

Some Indians, when spoken to in their Indian language by a missionary, will invariably reply in very deficient Spanish. However, others will respond with pleasure in their own language.

It is not uncommon for an elderly Indian, who as a child experienced the hunting, fishing, and collecting way of life, to refer to this lifestyle depreciatingly as living like animals—eating what is not food. This attitude is a tragic consequence of interiorizing non-Indian attitudes as normative. Such thinking leads to a sort of deathwish, a condition in which it would seem impossible to rekindle the flame of self-worth. We have seen this self-destructive principle at work in some individuals. In contrast, others have recounted with obvious pride such blood-chilling events as hand-to-hand combat with a tiger, or of standing immobile for hours in icy waters in order to trap some prey.

Clarifying the biblical message

Can an outsider shoulder the burden of reversing this plunge to death, this self-destructive urge of many Indians? We have always assumed that through Jesus there is constant hope and safety, and we have seen this positive principle at work among Indians as well. It is the testimony of many Indians who, when they found themselves sick and hopeless, called for prayer by the believers and found healing, wholeness, and hope.

During our early years in Argentina we became convinced that our responsibility as outsiders was not to interpret God's Word for the Indians (that is, to tell them what to do), but to clarify the biblical message so that the Indians themselves could respond to the story of God's great acts in history. Their responses would fit their culture and understanding of reality, and God would instruct them how to follow.

This obedience to God occurs in the autonomous Indian church. The church became a legal entity about 1960, but it became a functioning, living church through the wholehearted commitment and vision of those Indians who responded to the biblical message in ways that made sense to them. We often ponder the superfluity of the expatriate missionary in this process. We ask ourselves if we were really needed, if our presence was necessary. Our deep assurance comes in recognizing that none of God's children are completely independent of others. The basic requirement which Indians make of missionaries is to regularly attend their churches. The Indians put up with many unpleasantries just to have non-Indians visit their churches.

Early in our ministry when we visited a certain Indian church for the first time, it was announced at the beginning of the service that no one need refrain from dancing, "because Llaanoxochi and Chidaqna are not squeamish like other white folks—and besides, they speak our language." The Indians stifle themselves in the presence of non-Indians, so strong is their desire for visits from outside preachers and teachers.

If we could look back and say that the church among the Indians owes its growth to the availability of Scriptures in their native languages, it would be reassuring. But we cannot even say that its phenomenal growth is due to the availability of the Spanish Popular Version New Testament published in 1966, or the whole Bible in this simple, clear language since 1979.

Albert and Lois Buckwalter have served with Mennonite Board of Missions in the Argentine Chaco since 1950. Their goal of translating the New Testament and selections of the Old Testament into the Toba, Pilagá, and Mocoví languages is nearing completion.

Rather we admit that God's Holy Spirit works in spite of poor and inadequate translations, even misinterpretations. Dr. Eugene Nida, translations consultant for United Bible Societies, said he is convinced of the reality of the Holy Spirit, since many come to God in spite of early missionary translations that were unclear or even incomprehensible.

After all this discussion, it must seem strange that any translation was attempted in the Chaco. We can say it almost seems a miracle.

Actual efforts at Scripture translation were not attempted until we had a grasp of the language, almost ten years after our arrival. By 1968 Mark was published in diglot, and Acts in 1970. It was not until 1981 that the whole New Testament in Toba came off the press.

During all those years we struggled with the ambiguities of the situation: the obvious attitudes of self-denigration on the one hand, and those glimmers of self-acceptance which the Christian gospel seemed to reinforce on the other. We need not talk about self-doubts on our part, but they were there to plague us. Our posture of accepting the Indian expression of Christian faith as relevant and legitimate was constantly challenged by others, near and far. Age, however, has helped us feel vindicated, as we see and hear the development of a church even more vital than we initially visualized.

The ambiguous Indian attitude toward their own language has also been a threat. How should a missionary respond when an Indian community leader prohibits a preacher from reading the translated Scripture in public? My own reaction was to ignore the request, reading long passages as usual, since the rapt attention of the listeners demonstrated that the message was striking home. However, my preacher friend did not feel free to ignore his political superior's command. In disregarding the negative attitude of the Indian political leader, I was in reality taking sides. Yet I felt compelled to share the message in as clear a form as possible. Justification for pushing aside these ambiguities can be found in the following incidents.

After hearing a long passage read in Toba, a leader remarked, "What need is there for my commentary, since we all understood it?" On another occasion, an elderly preacher commented, "We of course know Spanish perfectly well, but when we heard the preacher read Scripture in our own language, it just opened our hearts."

Roman Ruiz is a Mocoví preacher who once said in public: "Of course I can read Spanish Scripture. But I don't really understand it until I read it in Mocoví."

Some months ago Lois asked a young preacher about Indian attendance at one of the Bible studies conducted by a Pentecostal mission. He commented that the non-Indian teacher used the Valera Bible, a translation in Spanish similar to the KJV in English. "But," he added, "we take our Toba New Testament along to read on the side, so we can understand the meaning of the Spanish."

How we have benefited

Apart from the perplexing ambiguities an expatriate faces in relating to the Indians, Lois and I know that we have been profoundly changed by the Indians' response to the scriptural message.

In 1954 after anthropological orientation, we decided to keep a hands-off approach to the Indians' response to the gospel, to accept the Indians' testimony at face value. By faith we decided to trust that God is greater than we are and is able to raise up a church that will profoundly change a people and give them purpose in life, a church that will meet their needs, a church for which the Indians assume full responsibility.

Originally we envisioned planting a Mennonite church among the Indians. Now this assumption seems vastly inadequate, ridiculous, and completely unrealistic since the pieties of Mennonites and Indians are worlds apart in focus.

But why assume that there must be uniformity of doctrine or unicity of organization to recognize unity in Christ? If my gratitude to God for making me a new person in Christ leads me to keep on living as a Mennonite, relating to Mennonites, functioning as part of the Mennonite Church, why shouldn't I be overjoyed and grateful to God when a Toba Indian demonstrates newness of life as a Toba Indian, giving thanks to God for healing and wholeness through faith in Christ? The very fact that such a radical reorientation in values in a Toba Indian takes place is a demonstration of my own legitimacy as a child of God within the Mennonite denomination and the broader Christendom.

It also demonstrates the universality of Jesus Christ to capture a people's loyalty at the point of their greatest need. God can be comprehended as much greater and his love more encompassing than our own Mennonite confines would have us believe.

If we accept Indian Christian expression as legitimate, how do we relate then to Catholics who work with the same Toba Indians? It is helpful to note that the patterns and practices of religious expression are subtly influenced by circumstances beyond our control—such as who our parents were and in what specific milieu we were born and raised.

It is imperative, then, to sort out the kernel of Christian faith as we discover it in the Scriptures. We can observe the practical varieties of expression in our contemporary setting, searching for that which is basic, and attempting to identify that which is culturally conditioned. For instance, as Mennonites we feel most comfortable if one person leads in prayer. In contrast, none of the Chaco Indians would settle for such muffled prayer. The greater the group participation and the higher the decibels, the greater the feeling that true prayer has been offered.

In this process of coming to terms with contrasting cultural feelings and aesthetics, the Scripture must also be seen as a cluster of documents reporting on what the writers saw as God's great acts of salvation history in their specific settings and times and among their specific peoples, centering around God's one great self-giving act in sending his only Son, Jesus.

If we make sure that this body of historical material is available in straightforward translations, in language that is clear and unequivocal, in the spoken language of common ordinary people, surely we will have taken the first basic step toward building up any people's understanding of the gospel.

As the years have passed this vision of transmitting a clear version of Scripture, translated into the languages naturally spoken by the Indians, has become more and more primary in our conception of our role among them.

When we first completed the translation of the book of Jonah in Toba, I had the opportunity to read the whole book in public. The reaction was tangible, at several points there was even laughter. At the end, one man who has been a notable evangelist by disposition confessed, "We all squirmed in our seats, because we, like Jonah, also try to escape from God, but it just can't be done."

The real significance of that book burst upon me through that Indian. The man-swallowing fish had always ruined it for me. But when I saw this was no problem to the Indians, the air was cleared and the book's real and vital significance could stand out more clearly and make me see myself.

God gives the increase

It remains to be seen to what extent the Indians will use the translations in the three related languages: Toba, Pilagá, and Mocoví. In the more isolated churches we discover here and there a preacher who will read his language in public. In the midst of the Indian psychological ambiguity, this act is courageous. We pray that the Lord will lessen the inferiority and self-denigration, and that our presence and help in making Indian Scriptures a reality may serve to clarify the gospel message and add dignity to Indian life.

We do know that having learned enough of their languages to interact with them has earned us a reserved seat among these Indian friends. In Paraguay in a Franciscan mission close to Asunción, we accompanied a Franciscan brother in visiting throughout the Toba settlement. An old medicine man seemed intrigued by my speech, asking me whether I wasn't a *qom l'ec*, a Toba. I replied that I was a *doqshi l'ec*, a white man. He still seemed perplexed. He then insisted, "But your mother had to be a *qom lashi*, a Toba woman!"

Identity and Authority in the Taiwan Mennonite Church

SHELDON SAWATZKY

The Mennonite Church in Tawan has a thirty-year history, and although it is still young, it remains a small church with less than 1,000 active members. It includes 17 churches, a hospital, and several service programs. This article is translated from Chinese and originally appeared in the September and October, 1986, issues of *Manna*, the periodical of the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan (FOMCIT). It was written in response to frequent discussions by church leaders on the subject of identity. The practical steps for building Mennonite church identity in Taiwan, stated at the end of the article, incorporate suggestions arising from these discussions.

Some leaders say the Taiwan Mennonite Church's basic problem is that it is not sure of its identity. Who is it and what kind of church should it be? Planted by North American missionaries sent by the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church in Taiwan cannot claim to be truly contextualized. Since it is not firmly rooted in the Taiwan soil, it is like an orphan that does not know to which family it belongs. The Taiwan Mennonite Church is searching to become a church with stronger identity, without which it stands in a position of vulnerability and danger.

Forms of identity

What kinds of identities does the church now have? If Mennonite church members are asked, "What is the Mennonite Church?" what will they answer? I have heard various answers to this question.

1. Some answer that the Mennonite Church is the church that operates the famous Christian hospital on Taiwan's East Coast. Mennonite Christian Hospital is our hospital. Originally begun by Mennonite Central Committee and now under joint mission-church control, the hospital serves as a focal point of our identity. This social service organization has made a significant contribution on the East Coast, and Taiwan Mennonites are pleased and honored to identify with it by saying, "This is who we are; this is our hospital."

2. Others respond by saying the Mennonite Church is the one who operates the New Dawn Developmental Center in Hualien. This social service ministry for mentally handicapped children represents our Mennonite Church. New Dawn, like the hospital, is an identity placed in institutions. Church kindergartens, such as the Ta-Ya Mennonite Church operates, are another form of institutions serving as a point of identity.

3. What is the Mennonite Church? Many members would say that it is about the same as the Presbyterian Church, like a little brother of the Presbyterian Church. We use the same hymnbook, and our form and order of worship is much the same. Some of our pastors and many members have Presbyterian backgrounds. This being the case, the Taiwan Mennonite Church is a hybrid—the Presbyterian-Mennonite Church. Because of our close relationship with the Presbyterian Church historically (in 1948 they invited MCC to do medical work among the aborigines in Taiwan), our identities are related, although the character of that identity is changing as less of our pastors receive Presbyterian seminary training. The relationship of these two churches in Taiwan is rather peculiar to this country, though not exclusively so. This is an interesting phenomenon considering some of the major theological and church polity differences between the two denominations. One thing we can say is that the Presbyterian Church, by protesting the unjust and unrealistic policies of the Taiwan government, has acted much more "Mennonite" than the Mennonite Church.

4. Fewer people would answer by pointing out the distinctives of the Mennonite faith—peace, nonresistance, believer's baptism, mutual service, evangelism. If the Mennonite Church is recognized by these doctrinal or faith distinctives, then our faith becomes the point of identity. In their search for identity, church members are requesting instruction in Mennonite faith distinctives. I am teaching a lay course on "Mennonite Faith and Life," and a seminary course on "Anabaptist Theology." FOMCIT is gradually publishing more literature on the Mennonite faith, although all the literature to date is translated and not original material from the Asian or Taiwanese perspective. There is no Taiwanese Mennonite theologian who has studied Anabaptist-Mennonite thought from the perspective and context of Taiwan.

5. Some may answer, "The Mennonite Church is a Christian denomination from America." The American Mennonite church sent missionaries to Taiwan for mission work and to plant churches. The church is still a mission church and receives support from overseas. It still expects the overseas board to continue responsibility for subsidizing new church planting. This kind of thought and actuality continues the idea that Christianity is a foreign religion, a Western religion. The result

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is that nationals may think the church is not really their own. They have no sense of identity in it since it is not an authentic Taiwanese church.

6. Then there are those who think the church's identity is in a famous personality, a very capable, gifted, charismatic individual, often the founder or first church planter. When Hugh Sprunger, the pioneer church-planter, was still in Taiwan, our members would answer the question by asking, "Do you know Hugh Sprunger?" Everyone knew Hugh. He served as a point of identity for the church—they were practically synonymous. When the Anabaptist movement began, its identity was in the early leaders. When we talk about the Anabaptist movement we do not speak of churches, but rather the contribution of those first charismatic leaders and founders of the movement.

7. Finally, some people think that if our church had a ten-story church center, we would have a firmer, more concrete identity. When people ask where the Mennonite Church is, we could say, "It's the ten-story building at the corner of Lin Shen Road and San Min Road. But if a large building serves as our point of identity, then we let brick and mortar define us. Do we need and really want this kind of visible identity? Is it consistent with a biblical identity of the church? These questions are not seriously considered.

Identity and authority

If the Taiwan Mennonite Church has so many different points of identity, then it has no common, unified, or stable identity. An unstable identity is weak and even dangerous. FOMCIT stands at a crucial turning point in its history. If a common identity cannot be found, the church may not be able to break through its present morass to a positive witness and the beginning of new mission work. We cannot speak of identity without mentioning authority. Identity and authority are closely related (Harder, 1985).

A church's identity is based on authority. If authority is weak and unstable, identity is weak and unstable. If there is no common authority, each local church can do what is right in its own eyes. FOMCIT has little authority to guide local churches or to solve local church problems. It distributes subsidy, but exercises little authority toward unifying the churches into mutually caring for one another, with cooperative strength for the work of the Lord.

If the Taiwan church is to find a common identity, it must have a common authority. What authority do we have now? What in fact should be our common authority? Our authority comes from several sources, and there should be priority and order of authority.

1. Our most basic, highest authority is that given by God through Jesus Christ. Before Jesus ascended into heaven he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go . . ." (Matt. 28:16-20). Christ is the head of the church, the authority, the source. The church is Christ's body, and from Christ the church receives its authority to continue the work of Christ on earth.

2. The Bible is also our authority. The Bible is God's Word, our standard and authority for faith and life. We must place importance on the Scripture, giving God's Word authority to control and guide our faith and life, not only individually, but also corporately as the church.

3. Preaching should also be authoritative. We need to respect the preaching of God's Word as having authority. If the FOMCIT pastors had a common understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures, this could help the church toward gaining a common authority. Instead, FOMCIT pastors are graduates of dissimilar seminaries—at least five different schools—which results in a variety of theological perspectives and interpretations of Scripture. To cope with this problem we need to establish our own training program.

The church is also unclear as to the authority and position of the pastor. What is meant by ordination? Is it a contract to do all the work of the church, like a general manager? Or is it authorization to preach God's Word and train believers for ministry? We need to reconsider the significance of ordination and what kind of authority the pastor should exercise. The pastor must personally receive God's call for ministry, but equally important is the church's call to the pastor for the work of ministry.

How should we understand and implement the authority of God in the church? This is a problem of church structure and church government. The Taiwan Mennonite Church emphasizes the autonomy of each local congregation—usually called congregationalism. Each church manages its own affairs and receives little if any guidance from the FOMCIT Executive Committee or Annual Conference. FOMCIT hesitates to meddle in the affairs of each local church, and furthermore, the local churches do not concern themselves with the affairs of other churches, or display much concern for the work of FOMCIT. Each church is more or less independent. The result of this kind of freedom in organization and structure is a lack of unity, little authority, and less sense of identity. Perhaps there is a fear of authority becoming concentrated in the Executive Committee or in the hands of a few leaders, resulting in authoritarianism and dictatorial administration. On the other hand, if the FOMCIT leaders do not have authority for the work of the church, they may resort to nonformal means to implement authority.

When we consider the question of authority, we need to remember one very important point—the clear differentiation between authority and authoritarianism. The meaning of church leaders exercising their authority is that of humble servant-leadership, not authoritarian dictatorship. If our leaders work in the attitude of servanthood, they will obtain the respect and trust of the membership. To earn this respect of the members is not something that is gained automatically. Rather it is earned through effort, humility, and love. Only in this way can authority be successfully executed.

In summary, the Taiwan Mennonite Church must clearly redefine the authority of the church. If the authority is clear, then within that authority we are freed for the work of the Lord. Authority and freedom are interdependent, even as under the authority of Christ we receive freedom to live an exemplary Christian life. If the authority of the church is clear, the church's identity will become clear. Then the church can move ahead and progress.

Practical application

What practical steps could the Taiwan Mennonite Church take on the way to discovering its identity?

1. We should establish our own training program for the education of church leadership. Such a program could be a more formal seminary course, or some form of cooperation with other denominations. We must also do in-service training of church members, elders and deacons, and pastors. A common training program will build the base for a Mennonite Church identity.

2. We need to reevaluate our church organization, structure, and polity. Have we overemphasized congregationalism and local church autonomy? Furthermore, the authority of FOMCIT, pastors, and church councils is unclear. Mutual concern among the churches is insufficient. We need to

strengthen the relationship of concern between FOMCIT churches, and between the FOMCIT Executive Committee and the local churches.

3. We must emphasize the work of evangelism and church growth. If the Taiwan Mennonite Church is to develop, membership must be increased to obtain a broader, more stable base upon which to develop the kinds of programs we desire, and to fulfill the visions and goals we have. We must not allow the task of managing institutions to overtax the time and strength of the church. The institutional tail should not wag the church dog.

4. If the Mennonite Church in Taiwan is to find its identity, it must become independent of foreign subsidy. When FOMCIT becomes financially independent, the church will have a sense of ownership in its own work. It will be FOMCIT's program, not the mission's program. We will thus build a sense of belonging and discover our identity.

Postscript

After much discussion and planning, the above suggestions are beginning to find implementation in FOMCIT. A theological education program was initiated in the summer of 1987. FOMCIT plans to be independent of mission subsidy for program budget by 1992. New church planting was begun in August 1987 after a ten-year hiatus during which a number of pastors and numerous church leaders left Taiwan. FOMCIT's organizational structure is in the process of reevaluation.

As the Mennonite Church begins to discover and build its identity in Taiwan, the church will become healthier, one rooted in its native soil, one led by the Spirit, one with a beautiful witness, one that pleases God, one that manifests the kingdom of God and brings honor and glory to God.

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Religious Pluralism, Civil Religion, and the Antichrist: A Suggested Exploration

ARTHUR F. GLASSER

Many say today that our generation is confronted with a unique reality in human experience—the increasingly universal phenomenon of religious pluralism. This has come about because our world is rapidly becoming a single community. Everywhere there is evidence of races and peoples coming together, largely for economic and political reasons. The significant postwar expansion of the Christian church has contributed to this pluralism. One encounters Christians everywhere. Almost every city is a locus of competing claims to truth and radically diverse answers to the universal religious quest of peoples.

As a result, scholars of all sorts urge Christians to stop contending that there is a center to "the universe of meaning," to cease proclaiming that Jesus is the only Savior capable of bringing people into contact with the Ultimate. In the face of this pluralism, Christians should settle for the "unitive pluralism of all religions" (Knitter:1985), whatever this means. They should be polite enough to regard all other religions with respectful good grace and work for tolerant coexistence.

Admittedly, this could lead to a skepticism that relegates all religions to the realm of the creative imagination of cultural diversity. In any event, the mood today is to do away with religious strife and all self-centered preoccupation with only one approach to transcendent reality. The world is in a mess, and ameliorating its raw nerves is the only valid vocation. Christians should be done with championing and propagating their own particular set of truth claims!

In this brief essay I do not intend to discuss the implications of capitulating to this line of thought. This does not mean that I am indifferent to the enormous issues it raises. For example, it challenges the actuality and viability of the incarnation, as well as the exclusive claims of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world, and the eternal Son of God. Our profound personal experience of the ultimate meaning of human existence is questioned, as well as the authority we claim for the canonical Scriptures. Scholars more competent than I must challenge the speculations of Cobb (1967), Griffin (1973), Hick (1977), Knitter (1985), Panikkar (1974), Smith (1980), and many others. In this essay I want to suggest that Christians must be alert to still another issue inherent in the phenomenon of religious pluralism. Consider the following sequence of thought.

First, religious pluralism is legitimate. It should be seen within the broad context of God's sovereignty, human fallenness, and Satanic activity. If we accept the biblical witness that God granted us freedom for responsible choice, then religious freedom must be within the will of God.

Second, religious pluralism challenges all religious parochialism. We accept this. The Scriptures are quite clear that God intends his people to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. This means that they will not withdraw from positive encounter with other peoples. Neither isolation nor encystment are pleasing to God.

Third, religious pluralism tempts the churches. The temptation is to give such attention to furthering social harmony that the church draws back from bearing public witness to the scandal of the cross, the essentiality of conversion, and the pursuit of "holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). This reductionism in time even secularizes lifestyle. The struggle to manifest its true nature as the redeemed people of God ceases.

Fourth, religious pluralism sharpens the issue of faithfulness to God. God wills that individual Christians and Christian communities be signs of hope in the midst of a world rapidly losing

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hope Christians not only accomplish this by loving one another but also by reaching out to non-Christians in humble, loving witness and service.

Fifth, religious pluralism demands that Christians confine their evangelistic ministry to humble persuasion, backed up by authentic personal holiness. They cannot use force to impose the Christian faith on people. The only means available are word and deed, prayer and faith.

Sixth, religious pluralism underscores the priority of religious freedom. It encourages Christians to work with other communities of faith to achieve a religious freedom not only to believe but to publish and propagate as well. This in turn will help the Christian movement become truly cosmopolitan, culturally relevant, and world embracing.

These six theses on religious pluralism will not likely provoke much debate among evangelicals. The general consensus is that the implications, demands, and temptations of this phenomenon should be appreciated. Some might argue that religious pluralism is here to stay. But is this necessarily true? Frankly, I don't believe this because of the momentum of the present world situation—its complexity and its state of flux. This impacts on the related phenomenon of civil religion. Consider the following sequence of thought.

First, the more pervasive the phenomenon of religious pluralism, the more a nation's social fabric is weakened through the sheer multiplication and diversity of religions, secular-oriented world views, racial and cultural enclaves.

Second, this growing lack of inner cohesion causes national leaders to become increasingly concerned for the unity of their citizens. They find it virtually impossible to unite peoples having no common set of values or shared agreement on national goals.

Third, when a nation has no commonly agreed standards of what is ultimately right or wrong, loyal or disloyal, and lacks a sense of ultimate purpose and meaning whether national or individual, its citizens are likely to drift into materialism and hedonism. The temptation is to live in the present and avoid long-range commitments. This in turn aggravates social disintegration.

Fourth, to prevent this disintegration national leaders openly seek support of all religious groups. They express this paternalistically by encouraging people of diverse religious allegiances to preoccupy themselves with living harmoniously with each other, while assuring them the state is in good hands. In the process they nudge them to tone down their social witness and accept a relativistic view of their distinctives. Is the pattern of officials attending interreligious "prayer breakfasts" an expression of benign governmental paternalism?

Fifth, in the light of the highly competitive nature of international relations today, the national leaders of many "democratic" nations feel insecure and threatened. They sense the difficulty of uniting their people to resist the ideological blandishments and military threats of more culturally homogeneous, totalitarian states. Not only are they impelled to act out of their natural desire to continue in power and privilege, but out of their genuine concern for the survival of the nation.

Sixth, this insecurity presses leaders to promote a concern for "national security" and loyalty to the state that tacitly endorses, even justifies, any violation of human rights in order to make it secure against its enemies. At the same time the fiction is promoted that church-sponsored protest movements which challenge specific abuses within the country are either naive or communist-inspired, to be ignored or suppressed.

Seventh, national leaders in their efforts to project themselves as uniquely capable of dealing with these enemies—real or imagined—tend to use religiously clothed language to sacralize their concern for "national security." What emerges is a nationalism, an overarching worldview of a people's unity and strength, that takes on the dimensions of a civil religion.

Eighth, when churches awaken to the sin of tolerating or endorsing the injustices perpetrated by political leaders under the rubric of "national security" and begin to resist the imposition of this secular religion, the authorities invariably resort to tyranny to silence their prophetic witness. Civil religion, no matter how benign its first forms, eventually pushes God's people to the wall where they can only retain their integrity by saying "no" to Caesar and suffering the consequences.

All this has eschatological implications. As this age draws to its end, the antichrist will probably introduce some form of civil religion ("the mark of the beast") in a masterful and progressive fashion to consolidate his power and to justify his war on the saints. At that time will religious people merely look the other way? What can we learn from the experience of the church in our day?

Germany

Early in his career, Hitler called for public prayer for Germany, that he might wisely lead the nation. In time, however, Nazi ideology was subtly imposed on the people through media and the schools. All were urged to take the Oath of Loyalty to Hitler. Catholic and Protestant clergy were pressed to take leadership in this. As a result, the Nazis almost totally silenced the prophetic witness of the church against racism, war, and the extermination of the Jews. Indeed, throughout the Nazi era the church was torn internally "between the true and false church" for "the true story was not an unrelieved epic of faith and courage; it was to a large extent a sad tale of betrayal, timidity, and unbelief. Even among those most faithful to the gospel, there were 'none righteous, no, not one' " (Cochrane 1962:16).

Japan

Increasingly during the 1920s and 1930s the Japanese authorities sought to extend their control over the church by nullifying its social conscience, smothering its witness, and destroying its collective power. One objective was to impose civil religion ("State Shinto") on the people of Formosa, Korea, Manchuria, and on its own people in Japan. The attempt ended with Japan's military defeat in 1945. But it is being currently reviewed via the efforts of prominent officials to regain national recognition for the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine. At this shrine the spirits of Japan's war dead are believed to be present. The official pitch is that all "true" Japanese are happy to do obeisance in their presence as an expression of their loyalty to Japan. Understandably, the churches are both divided and troubled by this renewed test of their loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Marxist Countries

It is widely recognized that churches in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Ethiopia, and other Marxist-dominated countries are currently struggling to preserve their integrity and extend their witness—both evangelistic and prophetic—in the face of varying degrees of state hostility. The Marxist leaders exploit nationalistic pride to consolidate control over the churches. Some churches "register" with the government and gain privileges, but experience curtailment of their prophetic witness. Other churches choose to be "unregistered" to maintain their liberty in Christ. But they have thereby exposed themselves to government hostility.

Conclusion

Religious people are quite vulnerable to manipulation by political leaders, whether they live in the so-called "free" world or in the Marxist-controlled countries. This becomes apparent when they are urged to accept "a little bit" of secular religion for the sake of the nation. Uncrucified nationalism is the sin which Christians have greatest difficulty in recognizing and resisting. Perhaps this is what the writer to the Hebrews meant when issuing the call to "lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely" (Heb. 12:1).

It is rather significant that in Poland a centralized Catholicism is closely identified with the national aspirations and loyalties of the Polish people. As a result, its resistance to the atheistic and hostile state is virtually unique in the Marxist world. Does this mean that fragmented Protestantism, because of its vulnerability to the blandishments of nationalism, is easily compromised by Marxist power? Evangelicals should not be complacent at this point. They have only to study the record of the "free" churches in Germany and throughout Europe during the Nazi era and occupation. Does all this mean that when the antichrist emerges he will find all Protestants a pushover, whether they are liberal or evangelical? I hope not. But when I realize how indifferent most Christians appear to be of the experience of their own particular churches in recent history, I am not hopeful.

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In review

Thunder in the Valley. By Doug and Evelyn Knapp. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1986, 240 pp., $5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Donald R. Jacobs

Doug Knapp was already well established in a career as "ornamental agronomist" and settled into the American way of life when the Southern Baptist Mission Board asked him and his wife to consider being agricultural missionaries in Tanzania. Then of mature age, they accepted the assignment.

The Knapps deliberately settled 100 miles from the "station" in order to incorporate themselves better into the community. After 15 years of living and worshiping with the Tanzanian people, the Knapps began to experience "harvest." From 1978 to 1985 the number of congregations increased from 60 to 250, offerings rose from $422 to $19,020 (U.S.), and baptisms went from 476 to 7,973. This growth spurred the Southern Baptist Mission Board to hire a professional journalist, Robert O'Brien, to write the story.

The Knapps' braiding of evangelism and service is good. Little theological reflection is recorded, but the outcome is convincing in its properness and obvious success.

I felt some uneasiness about a few things. Where were nurture and leadership training in the priorities? I recall the day I baptized approximately 136 people at Shirati, Tanzania. I kept thinking, "It is one thing to convert and baptize; it is an entirely different matter to enable the gospel to penetrate into the persons so deeply that they are set free to follow Christ in their world." I felt this same anxiety as I read of the numerical expansion in this account.

We all have denominational "blinders," but the story leaves one under the impression that the Southern Baptists introduced the gospel to Mbeya District. In reality, the Moravian and Lutheran churches were there for years prior to this. Certainly the Knapps had fellowship with other non-Baptist missionaries and church leaders. In fact, it is in missions that denominations do (or should) break down a bit.

Some people might ask why it is that a missionary who serves in a mature church of 30,000 members maintains this kind of profile in 1986? This no doubt can be explained by the fact that the book focuses on the Knapps, not on the development of the local church and local leadership which was probably happening at the same time.

The book is a tale well told. It is a good church library book, or the sort of thing to put into the hands of youth contemplating mission involvement. Missiologists, however, will find nothing new.

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Moody—The Biography. By John Pollock. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983, 351 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Alvin Enns

With his customary thoroughness, John Pollock has accumulated an impressive amount of information about Dwight Lyman Moody and his multifaceted ministry. Luis Palau writes in the Foreword that "this is one of the most accurate and detailed studies of Moody's life ever made." In some instances attention to detail detracts from the story of the biography. At the same time, however, it enhances the total picture of an amazing man and his far-reaching ministry. Indeed, as the *New York Times* commented, "By the time a reader has finished the book, he has the impression that he knows Moody, has heard him, and even shaken hands with him."

This book is exciting and stimulating at two levels. First, it presents a lucid portrait of one of the great heroes of the faith. Moody was an ordinary man who rose from obscurity with only a minimum of education "to bring two continents to repentance"; the ripple effect was felt around the world. He was a warmhearted man who could relate with ease to the ragamuffins, millionaries, and royalties alike, as well as to ecclesiastical and political leaders of his time.

Second, the book unobtrusively depicts the timeless principles of effective outreach. Moody was motivated by Henry Varley's comment, "The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through a man who is fully consecrated to him." He desired to be that man without aspiring for personal gain or fame. Personal integrity and concern for others were at the heart of his effectiveness. For years he kept his vow never to let a day go by without talking to someone about Jesus.

At the same time, he was committed to mass evangelism. The focus of his ministry was on the great cities of his day. He understood that the gospel flows more easily from the metropolitan centers to the hinterland than the other way around.

Moody also understood that no one person or denomination can do the work alone. One of his great visions was to see others trained and motivated to share Christ around the world. Thus Moody Bible Institute became the first school of its kind in North America, founded with the intent to train and equip lay Christians for witness around the globe.

A few months before his death in 1899, Moody commented, "Some day you will read in the papers that Moody is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now." Indeed, his spirit, legacy, and influence live on.

This book allows the reader to feel the pulse of one of the great evangelists and educators of all times and thus is worthwhile reading.

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Jesus and the Hope of the Poor. By Luise Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 134 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Tom Rutschman

Steeped in the best historical critical methods of biblical scholarship, Schottroff and Stegemann produce a readable and exciting study. Both authors are German New Testament university professors.

Informed by liberation theologians, the authors point to the Bible's two contextual layers: its own and that of the individuals who read and interpret it. The focus of the book, however, is on the Jesus tradition as it relates to the poor.

Jesus is shown as inseparable from his disciples and the community at the different stages of the Gospels, rejecting the attempt to find the *historical* Jesus, yet reflecting on the historical situations in these stages. As a symbol of Christian faith and hope, Jesus "is a human being among his fellows; he is a brother and not a metaphysical entity" (p.4).

The sociohistorical emphasis of the book shows us the religious, political, and social situations of the Jesus tradition. This approach gives concrete handles to understanding how Jesus moves to the practical level and encourages believers to engage in ongoing sociohistorical research:

> *The following of Jesus was a way of life that brought together human beings who were living lives of affliction. The affliction, then as now, was produced by repression, hatred, violence, and exploitation. Anyone who reduces the following of Jesus to an enterprise of the heart, the head, and private interpersonal relations restricts the following of Jesus and trivializes Jesus himself* (pp. 5-6).

There is no doubt that Jesus had fellowship with very poor people. Tax collectors and sinners gained "a vision of what human beings are created for" (p. 31) that changed their lives. Jesus took the poor seriously by associating with them and claiming that God is on the side of those worst off in the present world.

The Gospel of Luke guides the rich into solidarity with the poor. Jesus' own disciples chose a life of voluntary poverty. This in itself is a critique of the rich and gives direction in principle to the rich Christians of Luke's day. Discipleship demands for the rich are high: renunciation of half of their possessions, making risky loans, canceling debts, making gifts.

Word studies and analysis of difficult pericopes confirm the authors' high regard for the biblical record. The book attempts to understand the historical past, and it succeeds in making sociohistory exciting and relevant. The authors' use of biblical criticism, occasional use of Greek, and their reluctance in seeing miracles as supernatural occurrences rather than psychosomatic phenomena, will undoubtedly narrow the circle of readers.

This book definitely contributes to the agenda of liberation theology even though it originates in the First World. Having been exposed to liberation theology as a missionary kid in Latin America as well as through theological education, but presently living in the prosperous First World, my appetite was only whetted by this book. Where do I go from here in pastoring a "rich" Swedish congregation to help us live more in line with the Jesus tradition? The authors allow us to converse with the biblical tradition to create our own praxis. "Only the blind can say that sacred Scripture is of no use in dealing with contemporary social questions" (p. viii).

Tom Rutschman and his wife, Disa, serve as Overseas Mission Associates with Mennonite Board of Missions in Jokkmokk, Sweden.

China: The Church's Long March. By David H. Adeney. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books/ OMF, 1985, 256 pp., $7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Pat Wall

In this recent addition to Regal's *Worldview Series* David Adeney contributes what is perhaps the most balanced and well-written account of the church in post-Mao China yet in print.

Adeney's name is familiar to most *Mission Focus* readers. A product of the British Inter-Varsity Fellowship, he first sailed to China in 1934 with the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship). The book's introduction catalogs his fifty-plus years of Christian service either in or pertaining to China and Chinese people. Until last year David served as North American coordinator of OMF's China Program.

Adeney's longstanding commitment to China coupled with some first-rate editing and layout make this a top-quality purchase. The text is thoroughly documented and includes a helpful listing of journals and organizations focusing on China.

Adeney has done a particularly fine job in explaining the contemporary (post-Mao) situation. Most accounts, it seems, take sides either with the house church movement or the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). Adeney sees God at work in both of these manifestations of the church in China. He even suggests that the division may not be as sharp as some reporters make it out to be. His analysis receives credibility considering that he has made eight investigative journeys to China in the past ten years; these provide some juicy illustrative material to underline the careful factual reporting he provides. He still maintains a vast network of Chinese relationships from his earlier years.

If there is any weakness in the book it is the brevity of chapter one (Chinese Church History). The contemporary missionary situation in China is unintelligible apart from a more thorough understanding of its past associations with foreign imperialism and colonialism, e.g., opium trading. Adeney does recount these associations in a brief paragraph. But the reader in need of a sense of history had better look elsewhere. For this reason the book's subtitle may be a bit misleading; eight of the nine chapters focus on the contemporary situation.

We in the believers' church tradition are inevitably fascinated with the dual status of the church in China today. Perhaps Adeney's most helpful material for many of us will be his objective evaluations of both the TSPM and the house church movement.

Pat Wall is currently Missions Specialist for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and director of IVCF's Overseas Training Camp, China. He taught English in China from 1984 to 1985.

Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace. By Harvie M. Conn. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982, 112 pp., $4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter Kroeker

The debate on the appropriate role of evangelicals in the proclamation of the gospel and its involvement in bringing about social justice has been the topic of numerous conferences in the last 20 years. Conn refers to the Lausanne Covenant, formulated at the 1974 Congress on World Evangelization, as representing some degree of two-dimensional spirituality (p. 61). The theme was continued at the Grand Rapids Consultation of 1982 and again in Wheaton in 1983. The evangelical community seems to be committed to both word and deed in a holistic ministry, but has never stated unequivocally that both must be part of a single whole. Evangelism, they say, is primary.

In this book, Dr. Conn brings a well-reasoned, biblically founded argument that both physical and material needs of people must be addressed as a single whole. Furthermore, Christians need to go into the community and listen to people in order to discern their needs, rather than simply inviting them to come to

church and listen to the preacher.

Conn argues that evangelization by the church must be found in its *kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and *leiturgia* (proclamation, fellowship, service, and worship). But he adds a fifth Greek word for the description of the church's outreach—*dikaioma*—described as dealing with the publicans. He quotes an army colonel's description of how the "publicans" view the church: "Church services in organized Christianity represent nothing more than a sacred canopy which covers the previous week's debauchery" (p.41). The challenge to the church is to confess its failure and become involved in addressing the injustices of society **along with** its proclamation of the kingdom. The resolution of tension between words and deeds in the witness of the church, he says, lies in prayer. He stresses the power of prayer and the need for boldness in approaching God in prayer. He insists that prayer must always be tempered by humility.

In his call for change in the church's approach to evangelism, Conn draws from the social sciences' use of projecting models and paradigms to accommodate changes which impinge on society. The application he makes is directed at church strategy but is equally adaptable to mission overseas.

This book is a delightful, readable, and challenging addition to the ongoing discussion of word and deed as mission. It should help dismiss the debate as pointless in view of the wholeness of Christ's own ministry.

Peter Kroeker is currently Director of Development with Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services.

Wanted: World Christians. By J. Herbert Kane. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986, 245 pp., $8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Victor Adrian

This is one of the best popular summaries of the contemporary mission challenge that I have read. The author, a former missionary to China and author and professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, articulates well the biblical motivation and urgency for world missions today. Beginning with a bird's-eye view of the world situation, he presents the excitement of church growth worldwide and calls the church to finish the task of evangelizing the world.

The author's purpose is "to convince North American Christians that the prime function of the church between Pentecost and the second coming is witness not worship, evangelism not exhortation; and that the responsibility for worldwide witness rests not on a chosen few, but on the Christian community as a whole. Not everyone can live and work abroad; but everyone **can** be a world Christian" (p.13).

The three major theses developed by Kane call the church into action. The primary function of the church is witness; no reader of the Acts of the Apostles can escape that fact (p.115). He quotes Brunner's words that the church exists by mission as fire exists by burning; he also quotes Lesslie Newbigin who said the church that has lost its missionary vision has also lost its right to be called a New Testament church.

The second thesis is the need for strong commitment to foreign missions. Recognizing that the whole world has unreached peoples (including North America), geographical priorities are still to be acknowledged. Many non-Christians in North America are so by choice, while billions in the third world are so "by chance." The church in the United States has ample resources to meet the needs of its 240 million, while on the other hand billions in the third world live in poverty, have a paucity of trained leaders, and demonstrate the magnitude of the unfinished task (p. 94) in spite of the exciting growth of the church in third world countries. Kane estimates that 90 percent of all full-time Christian workers are located in the West while only about 10 percent have the task of evangelizing the world's billions.

But can the world be evangelized? His answer is yes—if we have the will. Every Christian needs to become a world Christian, one who makes Christ's (God's) primary agenda his own. His allegiance goes beyond ethnicity and his particular denomination to a firm commitment that the church is a universal fellowship, that the gospel is a universal message to all men, and that Christ is a universal King!

A world Christian is one who recognizes his own personal responsibility for world missions. He may never go overseas, but his life, his interests, his prayers, his support, in a primary way, identify with God and his redemptive purposes for the world for which Christ died (p. 147).

Here is a call to a simplified lifestyle and an openness to the Spirit of God in order to finish the task of world evangelization—a task in which Western missionaries join hands with third world missionaries to the glory of God.

Victor Adrian is general secretary of the Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

What Makes a Missionary. By David M. Howard. Chicago: Moody Press, 1987, 96 pp., $5.95 (pb)

By Levi Keidel

Howard addresses his favorite audience—students. Believing that trends in North America and in the third world have refocused emphasis on the great commission, he uses the familiar biographical accounts of Scripture to cast the apostle Peter in the role of a missionary. In five concise, clearly written chapters Howard examines the call, growth, failure, restoration, and triumph of a missionary. At the end of each chapter are questions for group discussion.

Howard is a gifted storyteller. He positions the biographical segments sequentially and then illustrates from his own rich experience, from history, and from the Scriptures, to weave a tapestry of compelling interest. The book's content is made attractive by easy-to-read print, subheadings, and a liberal sprinkling of appropriate black-and white sketches.

At one point the author seems to exegete selectively to defend his proposition. He uses Peter's initial response to Jesus' washing his feet to illustrate a self-sufficiency which develops into pride. But he fails to mention Peter's subsequent change of attitude, which violates the idea (p.44). Apart from that, the book is carefully constructed and should prove interesting reading for the general audience. Missionaries on North American assignment would find this an appropriate gift for their hosts or for young persons who may be prospective missionary candidates.

Levi Keidel worked under African Inter-Mennonite Mission for 30 years prior to becoming an instructor of Mission and Evangelism at Columbia Bible College, Clearbrook, British Columbia.

Church Growth: State of the Art. Edited by C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and Elmer Towns. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986, 318 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Donald E. Yoder

The editors state two purposes for this book. The first purpose is "to provide a resource for pastors and other church leaders who want fresh, practical ideas on how to help their churches grow" (p.11). The second is "to serve as a reference work for any who are studying in the field of church growth" (p.12). The book provides a wide spectrum of church growth expertise. Each of the 22 authors are experts, or

practitioners in the field of church growth.

The main part of the book is divided into six sections. The first gives an overview of the church growth movement with special tribute to founder Donald McGavran, and a review of the church growth movement after 30 years.

The last three sections are an important resource for students of church growth, including a comprehensive list of "Who's Who in Church Growth," A Glossary of Church Growth Terms, and an excellent Church Growth Reading List. The Glossary and Reading List are especially helpful for further study on the subject.

The editors and contributors to the book see church growth principles as twentieth-century instruments given by God to his servants for implementing the great commission in a more rapid and effective way. The underlying motive in our Lord's great commission is to "go and make disciples of all nations." There is a good balance of emphasis on growth, discipleship, and integrity of church membership as important aspects of church growth. There is also a strong affirmation that all the church growth technology in the world is not sufficient for bringing the lost to Jesus Christ. "Drawing a man or woman to himself in love is the work of the Holy Spirit" (p.188).

This is a valuable tool for both the student of church growth as well as pastors and lay leaders interested in the growth of the church.

Donald E. Yoder is secretary of Evangelism and Church Planting for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The Subversion of Christianity. By Jacques Ellul. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 212 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Helmut Harder

Jacques Ellul is distinguished for his incisive and critical treatises of modern Christianity. This book is no exception. In *The Subversion of Christianity* Ellul draws a sharp line between that life to which the Bible calls God's people and the reality that has developed in Christendom over the past two thousand years. In light of the intent of the law, prophets, Jesus, and Paul, he considers the present state of Christianity and the church not merely a deviation from the original vision, but an unjustifiable subversion of it.

He goes to great lengths to explain how the subversion came about. In each case it was zeal for some good and right Christian cause that produced the eventual problem. In communicating with the culture of the day, the Christian faith adapted to culture; in attempting to reach the masses, Christianity became a directionless mass movement; in the attempt to make Christianity acceptable, everything has become acceptable.

Ellul elaborates on five areas of life and thought in which the problem becomes evident. The first focuses on sacralization and desacralization. Ellul argues that Christianity secularized a world which on the contrary should have been regarded as thoroughly sacred. But then the sacred was brought back again in aborted forms. The second area of concern is moralism. He argues that Christianity has inappropriately made moralism rather than spiritual life the center of its understanding of the Bible. The Gospel has nothing to do with moralism, he maintains.

The third issue involves the influence of Islam on Christianity. He "credits" Islamic influence with some of the distortions Christianity now promotes as doctrines, for example, the just war theory. Islam inspired Christianity to promote and incorporate violence and the desire for power and domination into its legitimized methods and aims.

Politics raises a fourth issue. Ellul maintains that the center of biblical Christianity is spiritual and precisely not political. The phenomenon of nihilism is the fifth concern. We live in a time when everything is exposed to radical doubt. Ellul lays the blame for this at the feet of Christianity, which has laid the foundation with its emphasis on the thorough sinfulness of everything, and has promoted a thoroughgoing intellectual critique of all human achievements.

At heart, says Ellul, our problem is that we have not come to grips with the New Testament gospel. We fail to see that the gospel is radical and thus acceptable only with great difficulty. Rather, we constantly accommodate to the seductive powers in the world, and then go to great lengths to justify our accommodation.

I found Ellul's discussion refreshing and yet questionable at points. Ellul's call to take the original Christian movement seriously to its seductive development through the centuries is helpful in throwing new light on our present state. However, the analysis loses some credibility where it paints the picture in black-and-white terms. Ellul does not show the church how to take the existing structures of life seriously. Also, much of his critique is addressed to those who have accepted the model of a Christendom for the church.

I would rate *The Subversion of Christianity* as helpful but not mandatory reading for persons who reflect on the church's mission.

Helmut Harder is professor of theology at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Coming Revolution in World Missions: God's Third Wave. By K. P. Yohannan. Altamonte Springs: Creation House, 1986, 205 pp., $6.00 (pb)

Reviewed by Eldon DeFehr

Some readers may be inclined to view this book as an extended appeal for money (a self-addressed envelope comes with the book). But that is not fair. Yohannan's real burden is to establish the church in Asia by mobilizing Asian Christians. The plan is simple, the implications are far reaching.

Yohannan is the founder and president of Gospel for Asia. Prior to his study in the U.S. he served eight years in India as evangelist and coordinator for Operation Mobilization.

The Coming Revolution in World Missions is a biographical account of the author's struggle to find an effective method of establishing churches in Asia. Yohannan measures the effectiveness of missionary effort by its success in gaining converts **and** its fruitfulness in establishing outreach-oriented churches.

American missionaries played a significant role in the past, but Yohannan is convinced that the new era must continue with national evangelists. He argues that, on the basis of biblical teaching, cultural understanding, political realities, success in evangelism, and cost effectiveness, Asian, not North American, Christians need to be "sent." What the Asian church lacks and the American church abounds in is financial resources. North American Christians must relinquish their desire to manage and control missionary endeavors and rather trust the new Asian leaders to plan and administer their own missions enterprise.

The salvation of millions of souls in the third world, we are told, now rests on the willingness of the North American church to provide the money to support dedicated, self-sacrificing national missionaries.

Yohannan is sure to draw criticism for rejecting many of our assumptions about mission work, such as the importance and effectiveness of humanitarian projects and the legitimacy of holding national agencies accountable to their American sponsors. However, he argues his case well. His advice is timely. Following his plan would indeed be revolutionary. His challenge deserves careful consideration by both laymen and missions leaders.

Eldon DeFehr is interim president of Winkler Bible Institute, Winkler, Manitoba. He previously served seven years as academic dean at the Institute.

The Black Mennonite Church in North America, 1886-1986. By LeRoy Bechler. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1986, 196 pp., $17.95.

Reviewed by Ed Taylor

This book is easily read with most of the statistics on the black Mennonite Church in place. Joy Lovett notes in the Forward that there are people, places, and events not mentioned in this volume that come between the beginning and the present, namely the historic beginning of the Minority Council. Even in the Table of Contents this 20-to-30-year period is omitted. What happened to the history between 1950 and 1980? There should be a revision of the book to add this 30-year span. The events of that period weren't pleasant, but are necessary to the interpretation.

We still have persons who participated in those historical meetings to write about those times: Hubert Brown, Lupe DeLeon, and Wilma Bailey were part of that history. Without this input, there is a gaping hole in the record of the hundred year span this book is attempting to present.

Finally, the price of this book will limit its audience. Perhaps a paperback with an interesting cover and a smaller price would encourage a larger readership.

Ed Taylor is director of Church Development for the Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

The World's Twenty Largest Churches. By John N. Vaughan. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984, 293 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Carlin E. Weinhauer

In his work, *The World's Twenty Largest Churches*, John Vaughan provides an overview of the significant factors which characterized large churches in the early 1980s. Those interested in evangelism and church growth have already read accounts of several churches found in this book. It is helpful to have comparative large church statistics all in one place. This provides an opportunity to discover the recurring themes and methodologies common to large and growing churches. From gifted and long-term pastoral leadership to the use of small groups, vigorous visitation, and various methods of evangelism, these churches believe they can grow and emulate Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:22, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Approximately ten pages of descriptive material and profile tables are given for 20 churches where a "composite membership" could be determined. For accurate comparison purposes, this is achieved by adding the average weekly morning worship attendance, the average weekly Sunday school attendance, and the total adult church membership. The composite membership range is from 7,076 at Kwang Lim Methodist Church to 130,000 at the Full Gospel Central Church, both in Seoul, Korea.

Of the 20 churches, five are in Korea. One is the Bible Baptist Church in Cebu City, Philippines. Another is the Miracle Center in Benin City, Nigeria.

Eleven of the churches are in the U.S., nine of them Baptist churches including First Baptist in Hammond, Indiana, pastored by Jack Hyles, and Bellevue Baptist in Memphis, Tennessee, pastored for many years by Robert G. Lee and currently by Dr. Adrian Rogers. Calvary Chapel in Santa Ana, California, and Melodyland Christian Center in Anaheim, California, comprise the others.

Two churches are in Central America, including Jotabeche Methodist Pentecostal Church in Santiago, Chile, and San Salvador Evangelistic Center in El Salvador.

Three churches in Brazil include Congregacao Crista, Brazil for Christ in Sao Paulo, and Madureira Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, although a "composite membership" was not available for these. Additional churches are cited in five appendices with comparisons to those which form the core of this work.

Strong pastoral leadership and creative methods of evangelism characterize the world's largest churches. In the Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, there are 1,200 highly trained soulwinners each seeking to win another family to Christ during the coming year. The First Baptist Church in Hammond, Indiana, uses up to 175 buses to bring people to strongly evangelistic services. At Highland Park Baptist in Chattanooga, Tennessee, each Sunday has a special name and goal: Stretch Your Heart Sunday, President's Sunday, Fill Your Car Sunday, and many others. Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, incorporates "saturation evangelism, using every available means, to reach every available person, at every available time."

Most of the 20 churches are starting other churches, chapels, and/or extension Sunday schools. These extensions or new small churches are also excited about growing and adopt many of the methods used by the larger churches.

Vaughan's contribution to church growth literature is a significant one. This work is brimming with data gathered from churches that are not just talking about church growth but are experiencing exciting growth. It is the account of men in our day who have an evangelistic and church growth mind-set seldom experienced in church history since the book of Acts. Their examples of faith and vision in a darkening and secularistic society is an inspiration to us all.

Carlin E. Weinhauer is senior pastor of the Willingdon Church in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Mission Focus Index

Volume 15 (1987)

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Editorial

I have been reminded recently in a variety of ways how finite we humans are. Each of us is shaped and limited by the particular historical moment in which we live. We cannot escape the peculiarities of our linguistic and cultural background. Even those who through dint of special effort become multicultural in their perceptions and sympathies nonetheless retain the stamp of their origins. Take a look at family photographs from five, fifteen or fifty years ago and one immediately confronts signs of datedness and human finitude.

What do we do with human (ir)rationality and God's providence? More precisely, how should we plan for the future of mission? One need not look far for examples of actions and attitudes that underscore our finiteness, or how unsuccessful we are in distilling wisdom from experience. Indeed, one of the marks of the Modern Age is how we confuse information and wisdom. The former is no substitute for the latter. Consider the following items.

- Highly motivated but uninformed people continue to arrive in major cities of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, convinced they are the first people to have caught the vision of sharing the Christian message with people of that continent. They have come to found a church. They do not understand the history of Christian missions, even the past 200 years. Consequently they are not aware of some of the hard-won lessons. When they discover the presence of other missions and long-established churches in these places, they are startled.
- There is a chorus of concern that today's graduates reflect the growing cultural isolation and insularity marking American culture today. Insights from cultural anthropology and intercultural studies seem to be ignored. This isolation results in an attitude of conceit about things Western and contempt for other cultures. Such chauvinism does not bode well for effective Christian witness.
- There has been widespread criticism of massive relief programs carried out since World War 2, especially those involving handouts and development programs that are imposed on people. Yet an amazing array of such programs continue to be inaugurated by televangelists and others who need such outreach for their own credibility. The wheel is reinvented endlessly, and not always for humanitarian reasons.

In *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*, Gene Getz proposes that we need three lenses to view the mission of the church. The first lense is **Scripture**. The central thrust of the Christian Scriptures is God's plan for the redemption of the world, and the command to each generation of disciples to follow Jesus Christ into the world "that the world may believe."

The second lense is **history**. Each generation needs to study the previous generations' experience in order to gain perspective on the present. History contains the record of God's people and their discipleship. One observation that can lend strength and stability to our present is that God honors faith. Glenn and Lois Musselman illustrate from their experience how small steps taken in faith and with the support of a loving community become the unfolding of God's will. Albert Buckwalter's long ministry has been empowered by a singular vision. It is surprising and gratifying to see how his ministry has opened the way for others to minister to him. This mutual enrichment and growth is characteristic of true service. If we pay attention to history—that is, God's dealings with other disciples—we do not need to walk into the future blindfolded. The continuing "acts of the Holy Spirit" are our guide.

Culture provides a third lense. Each generation must learn the meaning of incarnation. In learning its meaning, we discover among other things the importance of contemporary culture for defining the context for witness. It has been said that we do not really read the Bible if we read only the Bible. In other words, the Bible itself is a revelation of God's interaction with a series of cultures over a long span of history. To read the Bible dynamically means that we let the text penetrate our context. What is so impressive about the Scriptures is the relevance they had to the context in which they were written. And if we cooperate, the Holy Spirit can reveal God's will for our day with equal relevance.

We need not hesitate to reject those initiatives based on information rather than wisdom. We need not settle for enthusiasm and zeal which are unsupported by the perspectives of Scripture, history, and culture.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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